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COLL. CHRISTI REGIS
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CATHOLIC CHRISTIANITY

OR

THE REASONABLENESS OF OUR RELIGION

Permissu Superiorum C.SS.R.

Nihil Obstat.

F. THOMAS BERGH, O.S.B.,
Censor Deputatus.

Imprimatur.

EDM. CAN. SURMONT,
Vicarius Generalis.

Westmonasterii,
Die 12 *Julii*, 1916.

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BX
1752
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1916

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TORONTON

BY

REV. O. R. VASSALL-PHILLIPS, C.SS.R.

AUTHOR OF
"THE MUSTARD TREE: AN ARGUMENT ON BEHALF OF THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST,"
"THE WORK OF ST. OPTATUS AGAINST THE DONATISTS,"
ETC.

28182

"L'homme est visiblement fait pour penser."—PASCAL: *Pensées.*

28182

R. & T. WASHBOURNE, LTD.
PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON
AND AT MANCHESTER, BIRMINGHAM, AND GLASGOW
1916

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"EGO HOMO SUM, CHRISTIANUS, FIDELIS, QUOD DEO TESTE LOQUOR, CATHOLICUS."—S. AUGUSTINE, COLL. CARTHAG. INTER CATHOL. ET DONATIST. DIEI III., CCXLVII.

To

MY NEPHEWS AND NIECES

"La conduite de Dieu, qui dispose toutes les chose avec douceur, est de mettre la religion dans l'esprit par les raisons, et dans le cœur par sa grâce."—PASCAL : *Pensées.*

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PREFACE

It has been said—I think by some Nonconformist Divine—that it was never meant by God that it should be easy to believe. With this statement I profoundly agree—so far, at least, as it applies to those of us whose probation is intended to be concerned largely with rendering "the obedience of Faith,"[1] in face, and under the stress of, mental difficulties. Indeed, with this limitation, it is hardly more than a truism, though a truism of which oftentimes we strangely lose sight. The limitation is necessary, since it is certain that millions of Christians find faith most easy.

A Catholic agricultural population, for example, is required by God to exercise "faith working by charity."[2] Catholic peasants, like all others, whether faith be hard or faith be easy, are required to prove the existence of their faith by works.[3] They are called upon to *exercise* faith—a faith that is Living, not Dead—but the Faith itself to such folk is as a second nature. To their minds it presents no difficulty. The submission of the intellect to the Faith forms no part of their spiritual conflict. But with people who are termed "educated," especially in the case of those who are accustomed to think much on questions of religion, things are very different. For them to become "as little children," intellectually as well as morally, that thus they may enter the Kingdom of Heaven, is of the very essence of their probation, involving constantly struggles far more arduous than are required to resist the severest temptations of the flesh. And there are men and women to whom the exercise of faith is a veritable martyrdom—who shall therefore surely receive if not the martyr's aureole, at least the martyr's crown.

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[1] Rom. i. 5; xvi. 26. [2] Gal. v. 6. [3] Jas. ii. 17, 18.

But if faith often is not intended to be "easy"—otherwise the joy as well as the merit of the conflict and of the effort would be lost—faith is always intended to be reasonable.

The faith of the Catholic peasant is essentially reasonable. He "knows in whom he has believed,"[1] though probably he is quite unable to formulate the grounds of his belief. For him it is enough to know that he knows without knowing why he knows. But the faith of the man who can read and weigh evidence is in most cases, I think, intended by his Maker to be reasonable in quite another sense. It certainly will be enormously to his advantage spiritually that it should be so. It may, conceivably, be even necessary for his spiritual life that he should be able to state on paper—in black and white—why he believes in Christ.

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[1] 2 Tim. i. 12.

My chief purpose in printing this book is to help those who find faith difficult, and consequently may feel the need of such help, but have no leisure and perhaps no inclination for the reading of long works. It is intended for busy, but intelligent, men and women.

"Your book," I may be told, "is worthless for the object you have in view, as indeed must be the work of any Catholic priest on such a subject, for you go to the evidence biassed in one direction—determined to accept it. You start with a presupposition. You have what you call 'the Gift of Faith.'"

To any such objection I should reply somewhat in this fashion:

"Yes, it is true, thank God, that I do *now* believe in Christianity, independently of any external evidence, and I trust that I should continue to believe, even were all such evidence suddenly to vanish from my sight, or were it to appear to my mind to be inadequate. Still, though this is the case, it is also true that I am, as a matter of fact, convinced of the truth of Christianity by the force of the evidence, altogether independently of my faith."

And if it be further urged against me: "When you became a Catholic, you were too young to be able in any way to judge the evidence for Christianity," I should answer:

" When I became a Catholic I did not attempt to judge the evidence for Christianity at all. I became a Catholic, knowing at the time practically nothing about that evidence, simply because I knew *in my conscience* that it would be a sin for me to turn my back on Christ, and because I was absolutely convinced *in my mind* that loyalty to Christ involved for me submission to the Catholic Church."

I found myself unable to go on saying: Thou art the Christ, unless I was prepared unreservedly to believe Christ when in His turn He said to His disciple: Thou art the Rock. I saw as clearly as I saw the sun in the heavens that Christ was committed to the plain consequence of His words, to their fulfilment in history which He foresaw, and to the indefectibility of the Church which He founded on a foundation of His own choosing. If Catholicism failed, Christianity had failed also. That much at any rate was then, and always has been since, perfectly clear to my intellect.

It is strange, but it is true, that on the day when as a boy I became a Catholic I was little alive to the intellectual difficulties that concern the doctrines which are specifically Catholic, and as such are ordinarily rejected by Protestants, but was very fairly versed in the arguments for their truth; whereas, whilst I was fully aware of most of the difficulties brought by Rationalists against Revelation as a whole, I was entirely ignorant of the way in which those difficulties may be met. It is also strange, but it is also true, that I could have passed satisfactorily an examination in the arguments for the Real Presence, but should have failed hopelessly if I had been called upon to place on paper the arguments for the Resurrection of Christ. Strange indeed, considering that as a child I had been taught emphatically that the doctrine of the Real Presence was false and that the fact of the Resurrection was true. It simply chanced that I had never come across the evidences for the latter, but had found out for myself the evidences for the former. Against assaults upon my faith in Christ I was in my *mind* defenceless, for I was unarmed. My religious education, which had mainly consisted in learning the Old Testament history in English and reading several times the Gospels and Acts in the Greek Testament (excellent and useful though it was for other purposes), in no way enabled me to answer the Rationalist adversary of Christianity, nor did it equip me with proofs of the truth of my religion which would render me intellectually impervious to any critics or difficulties whatsoever.

So it was that whilst my head conspired with my heart to make me a Catholic, if I were to remain a Christian, I feared that it was merely my heart, in opposition to my head, which prevented me from denying Christ. When the workings of my brain told me that, believing in Christ, I should accept the definite teaching of Catholicism, I knew that here was guidance which I might safely follow, for here was constructive work. Provided the foundations are sure and safe, to build is always good. On the other hand, I saw clearly that to give up the Christian heritage was merely to pull down and make a waste—something purely destructive—always the counsel of despair. Moreover, and above all, my sense of right and wrong told me that to deny Christ would be the greatest of crimes. Therefore, when my head seemed not altogether to correspond with my conscience, I concluded (rightly enough) that something was somehow or other wrong with my head, and that sooner or later, if not in this life, then in the next, I should discover wherein lay my mistake. I have found out long since. In trusting the Character of Christ, I always knew that there could be no risk. In His Character there was nothing that could deceive me or lead me astray. In His majesty and the sublimity of His doctrine, He transcends all that is merely human, yet in the perfection of His sweet Humanity, He was, to the end, gentle and pathetic as a child. But Christ vouches for Christianity. I discovered years ago that what was once wrong with my head was, simply, that I had not taken the trouble to learn. To my shame I confess it—I knew nothing of the positive Christian evidences.

It was not really that head gave the lie to heart—any more than that truth can contradict truth. It was sheer ignorance.

But since I have been a Catholic I have been taught not to be afraid to face the whole question; above all, I have been encouraged to study the positive evidences of Christianity—and having done so, I am convinced that they are abundantly, and more than abundantly, sufficient to produce intellectual conviction of the claims of Christ, *and this independently of the presuppositions of belief.*

Not only have these evidences served wonderfully to strengthen my faith, and to protect it against the onslaught of difficulties which I still feel acutely and believe in many cases to be of their nature insoluble, but also I know that, were I at this moment without the Gift of Faith, but conversant with the strength of its evidences, I should be clear in my mind that my only reasonable course would be to kneel down and, in spite of all difficulties, pray God to enable me to submit my will to the Obedience of Christ and to His Revelation.[1]

Consequently, it seems to me that the fact that I believe myself to possess evidence of a higher kind than that which is merely intellectual (as may all men who will pray for it), rather strengthens, than otherwise, my conviction that intellectual evidence exists, of which I personally at present, through the undeserved Mercy of God, stand in no particular need.

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[1] It is never reasonable to refuse to accept evidence, in itself convincing, because difficulties remain without solution. In every science—even in such an exact science as that of mathematics—there are residual difficulties, which are and, admittedly, always must be insoluble. This fact in no way lessens the certainty of scientific conclusions.

I believed in Christianity when I knew nothing of its evidence, so I am never tempted to say to myself, and no one can fairly say to me, that I have manufactured this evidence, or manipulated it, or hoodwinked myself about it, or forced myself to accept its validity. *Why* should I do any of these things, when I believe that Christianity has proofs of a higher order than those which can be reduced to rule or set down on paper? But enough of the personal element. I have made this little bit of self-revelation solely in the hope that I may perhaps be of use to some other soul, and that no one may be able justly to say of me after reading this book, "He is a special pleader. He is a priest. He has to write to order; only thus can he keep himself in his 'system.'"

I do not believe in Christianity because I am a priest. I became a priest—I now live as a priest—because I believe in Christianity. Ordination to the Priesthood is, for those to whom God has given the sacerdotal vocation, a consequence—it is never the cause—of faith. Belief in Christianity is the underlying secret—it is never the result—of the activities of a Christian priest. It is not only their hidden motive, but also their sustaining force.

Belief in Christianity does not, it is true, depend, in the last analysis of faith, upon any arguments or evidences whatsoever, but is the Gift of God. None the less, the arguments and evidences exist, and prove that a man who refuses to believe is, to the great peril of his soul, closing his eyes to cogent and certain facts. All my experience assures me that when men or women are so unhappy as to give up Christianity on what they term "intellectual grounds," they have never faced its evidences. In numberless cases, at least outside the Catholic Church, they are unaware of their existence.

For the rest, my dear reader, follow I beg of you the wise old rule. Do not think of the writer, but think of what he has written. My one object is to help you also to know that which I know to be true. My hope is to put in your way something which I should have been very glad to have had put in my way when I was a young man. You will agree that, if the Christian Religion indeed be true, it is of the greatest importance for you to know it.

I shall regard it as the greatest kindness if you will say a little prayer for me that I may not break the pitcher at the well, but may keep the Faith to the end—lest, after I have preached to others, I may myself become a castaway.

O. R. Vassall-Phillips, C.SS.R.

This book consists of three parts, the first two of which are Apologetic in character, the third Didactic rather than Apologetic. It is hoped, however, that there is continuity in the work as a whole. One of the difficulties which beset the author in its composition arose from his sense that he was writing for a variety of persons, whose mental attitude and requirements were so different. He could only endeavour to bear in mind the questions which, as experience has taught him, are generally canvassed in the world to-day—whether by Catholics, Anglicans (of one type or another), Nonconformists, professed Agnostics, or men and women without as yet any definite creed, but sincerely desirous to find religious Truth—if religious Truth there be. This necessity—the necessity of his scope—leads him, now, to say that each chapter in this book really stands by itself. If, then, any reader finds that he is not interested in any particular subject (a subject which, he should remember, may be of special interest to someone else)—for example, if he be not interested in the argument from Reason for the Existence of God, or in the Development of Christian Doctrine, or in the bearing of the New Testament upon the Monarchical Episcopate—he may safely leave that subject alone, and pass on, without any detriment to his comprehension of what has gone before or of that which is to come after.

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Page 199, line 5 from bottom, *for* "more" *read* "less."

IS THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION TRUE?

"Il est impossible d'envisager toutes les preuves de la religion chrétienne ramassées ensemble sans en ressentir la force, à laquelle nul homme raisonnable ne peut résister."

PASCAL: *Pensées.*

PART I

IS THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION TRUE?

CHAPTER I

THE APPEAL OF CHRISTIANITY TO REASON

The Faculty of Memory

WHEN a man begins to ponder concerning the mysteries of life, he will, at least in most cases, start his ponderings with the absorbing subject of himself. Perhaps a child may see his own reflection in a large looking-glass, and suddenly will ask himself, with wonder, and not seldom with much fear: "Who am I? To all appearance I am here now—I see myself in a mirror—but where did I come from? What does it all mean? What does it portend? *Who* am *I?*"

He may perhaps have been taught the Catholic Catechism, and have already learned the sublime truth that he has been created by God after the divine Image and Likeness; or, on the other hand, he may have assimilated little, or no, religious knowledge. In either case it is quite possible (it occurred to myself in very early childhood) that he may feel that he urgently needs, and therefore must seek, some verification of the *fact* of his own actual existence—which to him will always remain *his* familiar mystery—in some source outside both of his own consciousness and of the statements of his parents and teachers. A child, though of course as yet utterly incapable of any analysis of his mental operations, will reach out for something that he can himself lay hold of—something which he may not merely *be told* or *feel*, but may also *test*. Now, he can only satisfy this need by an appeal to his *memory*. For example, he may remember that he left his brothers and sisters in a certain room, and may go in search of them (again I am drawing upon very early recollections), for the sake of verifying—as far as a child may—*reality*. If he finds his relatives, according to his expectation, where he remembers to have left them, and if he is able to see and touch things in the room to which he betakes himself, just as he recalled them to his mind before entering that room, he will undoubtedly *know* for the rest of his life that existence is real—that he himself exists, and that other beings likewise exist—altogether independently of his own existence.

There are plenty of men and women who, though their days of childhood have receded into the dim distance, still from time to time repeat this experiment of their long ago; they will, for example, search in a drawer where they remember to have placed a letter received from a friend in India, that they may find it and reassure themselves as to the reality both of their own being and of the external world that encompasses us all—thus again to prove by actual demonstration that life is not merely a glamour nor a mirage, nor one strange, long-drawn-out dream.

proves the reality of our own existence and of the external world.

We know, then, and can, if we wish, by experiment continually reassure ourselves as to the fact, that each one of us enjoys a separate life, possessing a *memory* with which he may recall with certainty some at least of the incidents of his past experiences, an *understanding* with which he may reflect upon the present and draw conclusions from premises, and a *will* with which he may, within certain determinate limits, fix his own future and control his own actions. Also, we know, and can prove, that we are surrounded by other beings—many of them possessing the same nature as ourselves.

In some such fashion as this, our own existence may be made certain to ourselves not only by consciousness and thought, but also—especially—by summoning the memory of the past, and then verifying our recollections. In this manner we shall be able also to satisfy our minds as to the reality of our relations with the other beings who are around us. "That I am a real being, subsisting in myself . . . that I am distinct from other beings; that there is in me a self . . . is forced upon me by constant, intimate, immediate self-experience with the most irresistible evidence."[1]

(*a*) *I exist.* There can be no doubt in my mind as to the *Ego*.

(*b*) *A number of sentient and also of inanimate objects are to be found outside of myself.* There can be no doubt in my mind as to *the objectivity* (that is of the reality—independently of my consciousness) *of the external world.*

Thus, apart from any teaching and from all authority, I arrive at two great truths, which, once apprehended, can hardly be dislodged from my mind without violence to all my past experience, and take their place permanently as part of my stock-in-trade—as a great asset in my intellectual life.

But having established these primary certainties, we may go a step further, and we shall find that

God.

in England, and generally in English-speaking lands, almost all children are taught to believe in the existence of One Supreme Being, the Maker not only of all men and women, but also of the heavens and the earth and of all that they contain—furthermore to believe that this Supreme Being, though Invisible, is Omnipresent and All-seeing—and that to Him as the Author of their life they will one day be required to render a strict account of all the actions done in the days of their mortality. English children are taught to believe in God and in human responsibility.

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[1] Fr. Maher, S.J., *Psychology*, p. 463.

Religion.

The Christian Religion.

Now, *religion* is that which binds a man to God; and the *Christian religion* claims specifically to bind a man to God through Jesus Christ. "This is life eternal," said the Founder of Christianity, "to know Thee the one true God and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent."[1] And again, "I am the Door."[2] "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life."[3] Such statements, made by Jesus of Nazareth, are to be found scattered throughout the four books which record the story of His Life. My present object is merely to state a fact about Christianity—a fact that will not seriously be denied by anyone who is conversant with its history from its beginning, but which is too often strangely obscured and even ignored. Christianity is not merely a sentiment. It is a *belief* in a Person, with whom His followers should be mystically, yet most truly, incorporated. "He is the Head of His Body, which is the Church."[4] Christianity is this, or it is less than nothing. If it be anything short of this, it can only be reckoned as a snare and as the cruellest of delusions.

It is happily the case that in England at the present day not only do almost all children learn, even in infancy, to believe in their own responsibility and in God, but also—at least in some vague sense—in Christ. The proof of this statement, if proof be desired, may be found in the striking and in one sense awe-inspiring fact, that no Englishman—or practically no Englishman—will be able to recall the moment when he first heard the Name of Jesus Christ. Here we have something which lies behind the earliest memories of every one of us, and is interwoven with the very beginnings of our life story. We may be able to remember when we began the Latin primer, or were first initiated in the mysteries of the multiplication table, or were first taught our letters; we shall hardly remember when we were first told the story of Bethlehem and Nazareth and Calvary.

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[1] John xvii. 3.

[2] John x. 9.

[3] John xiv. 6.

[4] Col. i. 18, 24.

Belief in God and in Christianity

That we exist—that the world exists—that God exists—that Jesus Christ is in some sense different from other men—here we find firm certainties possessed by almost every English boy and girl. Our own existence and that of the world may, as we have seen, be verified. The fact of God's Existence and the truth of Christianity must *at first* be accepted simply on authority, and cannot, in the days of early childhood, be verified by an appeal to any faculty of the mind.

almost always to be found in English children,

As our English boys and girls grow up into maturity, too often does their belief in Jesus Christ, sometimes even their belief in God, become vague and hesitating, so that whilst they still wish to believe, they hardly know how they may do so with self-respect, and ask themselves in vain whether there be in fact any proof—independently of authority and tradition—of the truth of the Christian religion. The inevitable result can scarcely cause surprise. Receiving no answer to their queries, whilst hesitating and generally refusing to call themselves Atheists, large numbers fall back with a sigh of relief upon that strange word Agnostic, striving to find in its very sound some comfort for their aching hearts and weary minds. Yet, if they would but reflect, *Agnostic* is merely *Know-nothing* in a Greek dress, and it is a sorry thing to know nothing concerning matters of the deepest moment, if knowledge be attainable.

but too often slips from them as they grow up.

But *is* knowledge on these sublime subjects—concerning God and Christ and Christ's religion—knowledge whether Christ's religion be true or false—knowledge as to the true import of Christ's religion—attainable on this earth? This surely is a question of paramount interest, transcending in importance any other matter that can conceivably be discussed amongst intelligent human beings.

Is knowledge concerning God and Christ attainable?

It is difficult to write, without danger of undue generalisation, on the subject of the answers, given by current English Protestantism, to the legitimate inquiries of honest men for reasonable proofs of the truth of Theism and Christianity. On the one hand there is no doubt that great works of Apologetics have been produced in the past by English Protestants; and at the present day several English Protestants—notably Colonel Turton and Mr. Drawbridge — are doing yeoman service in defence of Revelation. But, on the other hand, we fear it is too true that the evil tradition inaugurated by Luther, when he declared that faith is necessarily opposed to reason, has been widely accepted, until it has come to be regarded by great numbers of English people as axiomatic to state that, for them, there is but the cruel alternative — religious faith exercised against reason, or the exercise of reason without religious faith. To many an English child, who has asked with all reverence and keen anxiety, *why* he should believe in the religion that has been taught him, it has been answered: "That question is wicked. We must have faith." Little does the mother who answers thus imagine for a moment that by her well-meant reply she has sounded the death-knell of faith within the soul of the child she loves more than her very life. Well perhaps is it for her that she does not pause to consider how weak are the intellectual foundations of her own beliefs.

Unsatisfactory nature of Protestant answer to this question.

The Catholic answer.

However it may be with Protestantism theoretically or practically, the attitude of the Catholic Church on this subject is perfectly clear and well-defined. It is true that much strange misunderstanding as to the Catholic position with regard to the exercise of the reason exists amongst those who are not Catholics; yet it is hard to see how the misconception has arisen.

"I thought," a lady said to me the other day in obviously good faith, and without the slightest suspicion that her words were in themselves both ridiculous and offensive: "I thought that Catholics were never allowed to reason." Yet the Catholic Church has been consistently, and in every age, the great champion of the rights of the human reason, and (as we shall see in the next chapter) has taught, from the days of St. Paul to the present time, that the Existence of the Invisible Creator can be proved from the visible creation, and that the normal man in possession of unimpaired powers of reasoning who fails to recognise this truth, is without excuse. He has perversely refused to draw the conclusion which, when the facts are faced and considered, should be seen to be inevitable.[1]

It is interesting to observe that the condemnation by Pope Pius X. of the heresy or synthesis of heresies technically known as Modernism was an explicit vindication of the rights of the human reason. "Modernists," differing from one another in most things, agreed in asserting that religion is a matter of sentiment, and as such stands apart from reason —even with reference to the knowledge of the Supreme Being. The Catholic Church, on the contrary, solemnly teaches that the Existence of God can be proved by the simple and trustworthy operations of human reason—the guide whose leading, as our conscience tells us, we are ethically bound to follow.

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[1] It is not our business to consider here how far a man is guilty before God who accepts, without reflection, the perverse conclusions of an atheist society in which he has been brought up and educated.

With regard to the truth of Christianity, Catholic theologians hold that whilst its evidences are not of such a nature as to *compel* the adherence of the intellect (in the same way that one is compelled to accept a demonstration in Euclid), they *are* of such a nature as to make Christianity essentially *credible.* Therefore, a prudent man, when he has duly considered these evidences, or even some of them, will see that it is his *duty* to believe in Christ. By *believing in Christ* we mean submitting our minds without reserve to the Person and Teaching of Christ,[1] on the ground that He is the Divine Teacher, and that therefore His Word—all that He has taught—comes to us on the authority of God who can neither deceive us nor be Himself deceived. Nor should the fact that the arguments for the truth of Christianity do not *compel* assent occasion us any surprise. Long ago Aristotle pointed out that a different kind of proof is, in consequence of the different subject-matter under discussion, required for different conclusions. And in this matter of religion, it is plain that if the evidence either as to God's Existence or as to the truth of Christianity, were of such a nature as to *force* conviction, there would be no supernatural *merit* in faith. For merit, of necessity, involves some difficulty and some exercise of free will. We should also bear in mind that the reason is by no means the whole of man's complex being. Christ when on earth did not make His appeal, and Christianity to-day does not appeal, to the reason alone, nor even to the reason chiefly and in the first place. "For with the heart we believe unto justice."[1] It abundantly suffices if it can be shown that the evidences for Christianity are such as a prudent man would accept in the ordinary conduct of life, if they were offered in support of any other claim—evidence which he would regard it as essentially hazardous to reject.

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[1] *Cf.* 2 Cor. x. 5.

Object of this Book.

I have endeavoured in this book to set forth as plainly as I was able some of these evidences, first for the Fact of God's Existence, then for the Truth of Catholic Christianity. In such a task it is, of course, quite impossible to be original, nor would I, in this matter, be original if I could.

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[1] Rom. x. 10.

I wish to make one other preliminary observation. Catholics at least, and, I doubt not, devout Protestants as well, who use their religion, find in its very practice abundant proofs of its truth. For them, Christianity (as I have already suggested in my Preface) is its own Evidence, and oftentimes they ask for no other. Christianity supplies all their spiritual needs. It does all and far more than all that it set out and claimed to do. For them, to deny that the Christian Sacraments and prayer to Christ sustain the life of their souls would be as irrational—because as much opposed to daily experience—as to deny that the bread they eat and the air they breathe sustain the life of their bodies. They could no more deny Jesus Christ and His teaching than they could deny their own existence. For them, no other proof is necessary than that which is furnished by their own hearts. Sometimes, indeed, they shrink sensitively from proofs, as might the Magdalen have shrunk within herself, had needless proofs been proffered her whilst she yet knelt beneath the Cross of her dying Saviour; and if in this temper they examine the Christian Evidences, they need not be surprised or disappointed should they be left with the feeling that their faith has been in no way strengthened. For such as these, *whilst they are in this state of contented peace*, this book is not intended. They in no way require it. To give it them might very likely be to do them an actual disservice. It *is* offered to all those who though they believe with the certainty of supernatural faith, are well aware that on its intellectual side their faith needs strengthening. Especially it is offered to any who may have been made unhappy by the confident and reckless talk against religion that is to be heard all around us at the present day ; above all it is submitted to the consideration of English men and women (their name is legion) who, through no fault of their own, are really unaware that there are any proofs of Christianity at all. Such readers may be sure that the author has above all things tried to be fair and honest with himself as well as with others, and has set down nothing, for their reflection, as to the relevance of which he hesitates, or concerning the truth of which he is not absolutely convinced.

CHAPTER II

THEISM

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

The Creator should be known through His creatures.

In the Book of Wisdom we read these words: "By the greatness of the beauty of creatures the Creator of them may be seen, so as to be known thereby."[1] We cannot yet see God in Himself. But, even in this life, we may, if we will, see Him in His works and in their beauty. And not only may the Creator be recognised in His creation, but greatly do they deceive themselves who refuse to draw the conclusion which, unless violence be done to reason, is perceived to be inevitable. "All men are vain in whom there is not the knowledge of God, who by the good things that are seen would not learn to know Him that is, and who have not, through attending to the works, acknowledged Him that made them."[2]

Such was the teaching and the belief of Israel before the coming of Christ. It remains the teaching and the belief of Israel at this hour.

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[1] Wisd. xiii. 5.

[2] Wisd. xiii. 1.

These statements of the Old Testament we find reaffirmed in the New: "For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made; His Eternal Power also and Divinity—so that they are inexcusable . . . who changed the Truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever."[1]

Such has been the teaching and the belief of Christianity from the beginning. It remains the teaching and the belief of Catholic Christianity at the present moment.

In the first chapter of *The Dogmatic Constitution Concerning the Catholic Faith*, the Fathers of the Vatican Council taught as follows:

"The Holy Catholic Apostolic Roman Church believes and confesses that there is One God, the Living and the True, the Creator and the Lord of Heaven and earth, All-powerful, Eternal, Immeasurable, Illimitable, Infinite in Understanding and Will and in every perfection;" and in the second chapter we read the solemn Decree: "The same Holy Mother Church holds and teaches that God, the Beginning and the End of all things, can be certainly known by the natural light of human reason, from the things that have been created." Nor need we be surprised to find the "sanction" for these verities in the Canons that follow. "If any man shall deny that there is One True God the Creator and the Lord of the things that are seen and of those which are unseen, let him be Anathema."[1] "If any man shall say that the One and True God, our Creator and Lord, cannot, through the things that have been made, be certainly known by the natural light of the human reason, let him be Anathema."[2]

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[1] Rom. i. 20-23.

Of course one whose mind is so abnormal in its operations that by no fault of his own he stands outside the category of sane and balanced men and women—so that he is not really *open* to conviction—will not be held responsible by God for his mental limitations.[3]

"How," said an unlettered Arab to me in the desert not long ago, reaching his hands out towards the sky above us, "How can any man see *that* and not believe in God?" How indeed? His words were but the echo of those of the Jewish Psalmist: "The Heavens are telling the glory of God." Those same Heavens will tell that glory to all those who have eyes wherewith to see, even as long as the sun shall shine upon the earth, as long as the stars revolve in their courses.

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[1] *De Deo, rerum omnium Creatore* (Canon I.).

[2] *De Revelatione* (Canon I.).

[3] The Church, we must remember, never judges the individual conscience. "*De internis Ecclesia non iudicat.*" A man of great intellectual power may, conceivably, not be responsible, in consequence of habits of thinking induced by long familiarity with false systems of philosophy, for his failure to see truths—even the most obvious—in their due proportion and reality.

Object of this chapter.

My object in this chapter is merely to set out some of the great arguments (especially those drawn from Causality, Design and Conscience) which prove the existence of an invisible Creator.

Causality.

I. *Causality.*—The principle of causality may be expressed by the formula: "Every being that now exists, but does not exist *necessarily*, is the effect of a cause." To deny the truth of this proposition would be not only to deny the truth of religion, but also to make all science impossible. Once call in question the principle of causality, and it is clear that we are reduced to a condition of intellectual chaos. Nor is it possible to restrict the relation of cause and its effect to that of a mere *now* and *after*. I may be looking idly out of my window and see one passer-by follow another; in London I may observe one automobile come after its fellow; in the East I may perhaps watch a long procession of camels. Here I have "consequents" and "antecedents." Yet I am perfectly aware that it is quite possible, and often very probable, that the men and the motors and the camels who pass so steadily, each following a predecessor, have no connection one with another. It is a mere "*sequence.*" But no man will persuade me that the direction of the motors is not the effect of the action of the chauffeurs, or that the route of the camels is not controlled by the will of their driver. Here we are face to face with something which is no longer *mere* sequence. We see the effect; we see, at least partially, the cause. The Law of Causality is established before our eyes. Everything, then, which does not exist *necessarily* (that is to say, everything which *might not* exist but which as a matter of fact *does* exist) is the effect of a cause. If anyone is to be found who will deny this principle, we can no more argue with him than one can argue with a man who should refuse to admit that wood in fit condition for burning is sure to burn when brought into connection with fire. It is idle to admit the principle, as everyone is forced to admit it, in everyday life, and to reject it in a philosophical discussion.

Now, to apply this certain principle of causality to the external world in general. Let me think for a moment of myself and my own being. I clearly am not uncaused, for I *am*, yet I *need* not be. I do not exist *necessarily*. But, as we have just seen, no being that does not exist necessarily can be without a cause. I did not, I am sure, cause myself. If then, I am neither uncaused, nor self-caused, it follows that I have been caused.

Again, that which is true of myself holds good of my parents and of their parents. It holds good as far back as I can go in thought of those who have gone before me in the line of my ancestors. It holds good of all beings upon the earth. Whenever I look at them, whenever I think of them, I am forced by an imperative first principle of my reason to know that each one of them had a cause. *Its* existence was not *necessary*. It might not have been. Therefore it was produced by the action of another outside of it. But this other was only what we call a *secondary* cause, for it was itself caused by another. I watch a child with its mother. "Yes," I say to myself, "that child came from that mother. But its mother is only the secondary cause of the child's being, since she was herself once a child and came from *her* mother, and so on until we come to the first mother of our race. Who caused *her*—who unlike all other women, had no earthly mother?"

No one can admit the existence of an infinite series of secondary causes without involving himself in a manifest absurdity and contradiction, since a secondary cause is of its very nature finite; in other words, it had a beginning. So we are driven by our reason (if we would save it) to a primary or First Cause, which exists *necessarily*, and is therefore Uncaused, but is the ultimate cause of all. In other words, from the finite, visible creation, which is undeniably an *effect*, we rise to the conception of the Creator, who is the First Cause. We call Him

God. He is Essential Being. As such in the Bible He is represented by the two solemn words: *I AM*.[1]

We do well to listen to the noble words of the Mother of the Maccabees spoken long centuries ago to her glorious sons: "I know not how you were formed in my womb, for I gave you neither breath, nor soul, nor life, neither did I frame the limbs of any one of you . . . look upon heaven and earth and all that is in them and consider that God made them out of nothing and mankind also."[2]

Order and Design.

Moreover, the world around us not only points us to her Maker, but also cries aloud to *Design* in her making.

II. The *argument from Order and Design* has sometimes been idly sneered at as "the watchmaker's argument." But surely no argument can be disposed of by an inept sneer void of sense or meaning.

This great argument remains as forceful in itself as when Paley stated it. After I have, however cursorily, examined the works of a watch, I know—and must know—that those works were *designed*—that they involve a plan. If any man were to tell me that they came together at haphazard, I could not imagine that he was serious. Yet we are sometimes gravely assured by those who would impugn the

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[1] Ex. iii. 14; Neh. vi. 11; Isa. xliv. 6; Zeph. ii. 15; John viii. 58, etc.

[2] 2 Macc. vii. 22, 28.

Existence of a wise Creator, that the wonderful universe in which we dwell was brought into being by the "fortuitous concourse of atoms," that is to say in plain English by "the chance meeting together of tiny particles." Now, if it would be ludicrous to assert that tiny atoms could so meet by chance as to make the works of a watch, how infinitely more ludicrous is it not to assert that little molecules could by chance, without the ultimate action of a directive intelligence, meet together in such a manner as to form say the eye or any other member of the marvellous body of a man? The whole of nature, when examined, however superficially, calls upon us to recognise, in its Maker, *Mind*, far transcending—in its power of adapting means to ends, and also in its power of adapting organisms to environment—anything of which we know on earth. But this is not true merely of a first glance at Nature. The more carefully we pursue our investigations, the more decisively are our first impressions confirmed.

To quote from Mgr. Moyes:—

An illustration.

> "Force is one thing, but the purpose or purposive action which characterises force is another. It is the latter which is so plain in nature and which cries out for an explanation. Herein is the ulterior strength of the Argument of Design. I see a heron wading in the shallows, fishing for its prey. As I watch it at its work, I may observe that it presents all the evidences of

having been designed by an intelligent Creator. There is the long beak, so admirably fitted to reach down far into the water for the food it seeks; the supple neck, which allows it to deliver the stroke with unerring precision; the long legs, enabling it to wade far out into the water where its food may be found. I might conclude that surely an intelligent Creator had given it such a beak, neck and legs, precisely with the design that it should be able to live and to find its sustenance. But here I may stand corrected. A naturalist may point out to me that the bird has a history, and it was not always shaped as I now see it. He may proceed to tell

Evolutionist Explanation.

me what he believes to be the tale of its evolution. It was once very much like other birds. To begin with, its material organism was more or less plastic, and likely to be shaped by internal and external conditions. Then energy flows more fully into a member the more it is used, and the member is thus developed in size and strength. The bird, obliged to use its legs in walking and wading after its prey, and its beak in seizing it, gradually strengthened these members rather than others. Moreover, it would, by the law of heredity, transmit these characteristics to its offspring. The farther it would have to wade out into the water for a supply of food, the better chance its long legs and strong beak would give it of finding what it wanted. Those of its offspring which had the longest legs and strongest beaks would have more plentiful food, and would be the more likely to survive, to be strong and vigorous, and to have numerous progeny. Those which had not these advantages would be handicapped in the struggle for existence, and would become weak, would die out, and fail to have offspring. Thus, by the mere self-shaping process of energy moulding the organism from within, and environment moulding it from without, and weeding out the unfit(ted), we may come to have the heron very much as we now find it. All that is but a very crude outline of the working of a theory with which we all are familiar.

How the Explanation Enforces the Original Argument.

" Let us, then, for the moment accept the theory, and examine the process. There is at the very beginning a law of nutrition or self-preservation, by which the animal seeks to sustain the life within it by the quest of food which is outside of it. That is law number one. Then there is the law of plasticity of organism, by which its members can be moulded more or less by inward forces or outward environment. That is law number two. There is the law of invigoration, which sends most of the vital energy into a member that is most used, and least into that which is least used, so that the one becomes strengthened and developed, while the other becomes weakened or atrophied. That is law number three. There is the law of heredity, which transmits to the offspring even in a pronounced degree the character thus given to the organism of the parents. That is law number four. There is the law of the survival of the fittest, which enables those who are adapted to the food-finding and environment to live and thrive and multiply, and weeds out and cuts off the succession of those who are not. That is law number five. We have thus five laws, each with its own specific drift and operation; laws which we may roughly name food-quest, member-moulding, energy-flow, heredity, and elimination of the weakest.

And these five laws are not at all separate, isolated, or independent. On the contrary, they are adjusted so as to fit into one another, all moving together by a marvellous interadaptation and interaction to achieve one definite purpose—the production of a well-developed heron. Now that in itself—this mechanism of laws—is a combination far more wonderful, more eloquent in its need of a constructive intelligence, than any machine which has ever come under our observation. If I had under my hands a machine consisting of five main parts, which when put together worked harmoniously to effect a given object, I might admire indeed the skill of the inventor. But if I have before my eyes a construction in which it is no longer five dead parts, but five active laws of nature that are so deftly handled, interwoven, and combined, that by their interplay they are perpetually turning out a multitude of living types, with the ages for their working-day and the universe for their workshop, I may justly feel that here indeed is Design in the most telling and sublime sense of the word. Any mere adjustment of parts can never equal in ingenuity and skill that adjustment of laws which must ever be a higher and subtler form of mechanism. If an ordinary machine requires an intelligent constructor to adapt its parts and fit them together, how much more this higher mechanism of laws cries out for the need of an intelligent Maker to set them in motion, to combine their action, to direct their operation to the definite purpose for which we see them so wonderfully working. The earthly mechanic plods with his material, which he shapes in such a way that the laws of nature may help him to

Mechanism of Parts and Mechanism of Laws.

achieve his object. The laws themselves are beyond his control, and he can only apply them. But the Mechanic who can handle the laws themselves and fit *them* to work together, even as the earthly mechanic fits his wheels and levers, must transcend in power and intelligence all human genius.

"The argument of Design is not impaired, but rather strengthened and enhanced, by all that the naturalist can tell us of evolution. It means that the universe is a vast and complex mechanism, and that, not only for the marvellous adjustment of its parts, but above all, for the still more marvellous adjustment of its laws, it requires an Intelligent Adjuster.

Adjustment and Preconception.

"The need is one which we may see more clearly when we reflect on the connection that exists between construction and preconception. For things have to exist mentally before they exist really, whenever they have to be put into any kind of order.

"Let us suppose that we have before us a mechanism of a given number of pieces. It is clear that we have not merely these pieces, but a special quality attaching to each, by which they fit into one another in order to work for a definite object. It is equally clear that the pieces have received this quality, their special make and shape, in view of the object to be attained. That implies that they must have been seen and adjusted before they were actually made, else there is no guiding principle on which the adjustment could have been directed. The only medium in which things can be seen or shaped before they come into real existence, is an intelligent mind. It alone can foresee the object and mentally picture the pieces and their adjust-

> ment, and thus give to them the shape which is required for the purpose in view.
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> "To construct something is something more than to know something. If it is certain that it requires intelligence, and a high degree of it, to know the solar system, or the organism of a plant or an insect, much more must intelligence have been needed to produce it and to give knowledge so much to work upon. What mind alone can study, mind alone can have constructed to be studied. Men of science, astronomers and physicists, by the very measure of their genius, which we gratefully admire, are themselves the best refutation of the conclusions of some amongst their number, who ascribe the existence of the world to a cause immeasurably less intelligent than themselves. Hence we have to choose between belief in an Intelligent Creator—the most simple and rational solution, and the one most in harmony with the workings of our own intelligent nature—or to descend to the bathos of putting at the origin and in supreme control of all things a force which can neither see, nor hear, nor understand—an alternative which, as we have said, seems to us the apotheosis of blindness and ignorance. That which is at the beginning of all things, and which contains the reason of all things, is God, by whatever name we may choose to call it. If we are to have a God—and by the force of the definition we must have one—it is neither good nor reasonable, nor in keeping with our nature or with His handiwork, that we should have a blind one."[1]

It may be further noted that two considerations greatly strengthen our first conclusion.

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[1] *The Existence of God.* (Westminster Series. Sands and Co. Price sixpence.)

(1) The various organs of the body are what is called *prospective.* They were formed before birth and were of no use until after birth. In some cases they fall away when they have served their purpose. Thus, a little chicken has bestowed upon it, whilst still in its shell, a hard, sharp-pointed excrescence on the top of the point of its beak with which it may pierce the shell and emerge safely. This feat accomplished, it will soon shed the weapon which has served its purpose and is no longer necessary. Examples of this kind might be multiplied indefinitely.

Organs of the body are prospective.

(2) If on examining a watch we were to find that it could reproduce other watches for long centuries, our certainty that it was designed would be at once enhanced. We were already sure, yet now, were it possible, we should be more sure. Such a power of reproduction of species we see on all sides in animate beings around us.

Argument from reproduction of species.

The First Cause Personal and Transcendental.

From nature, then, we learn that the First Cause is not a Blind Cause, but that He has made the world designedly. In other words He is a Personal God.

Now, there can be nothing in an effect which did not exist first of all, and in a higher degree—transcendentally—in its cause. We know, therefore, with certainty that there is nothing of Being—nothing real and positive (evil is not positive; it is only a negation of good) in the world that is not to be found most of all—in the highest way—in the First Cause from which it originated.

"He that planted the ear, shall He not hear, and He that formed the eye, doth He not consider."[1]

Argument from the human mind.

But men have not only eyes and ears. They have also minds. If I can argue to a designer from a watch, with at least equal force can I argue to a designer from a book. Take any one of Shakespeare's plays. When we see the various characters so developed that each has its own individuality, we know at once that the man who wrote that play had a consummate knowledge of human nature. Take any one speech, or even one sentence in any speech, so admirably adapted to the character in whose mouth it is put—directly we read it, we know at once that the speech was designed. If anyone were to tell us that "a fortuitous concatenation" of talkers, without directive intelligence, had formed that speech, we should laugh in his face. The works of Shakespeare, one play of Shakespeare's, one speech in one play tell us that there was a Shakespeare—point to their creator—to the mind of Shakespeare. But did Shakespeare's mind itself come into existence fortuitously? If Shakespeare created Hamlet, God created Shakespeare.

All this is very obvious. But the arguments for the existence of God *are* very obvious. Otherwise they would not be peremptory. It is only necessary to state them once again, because we had to begin at the beginning, and because men are to be found at the present day who, by a singular misuse of reasoning, act and even sometimes write and speak as though there were no God.

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[1] Ps. xciii. 9.

It may, however, be well here to sound a note of warning. Although the Church teaches that the existence of God the Creator can, and should, be reached by the human reason, through the visible creation, she nowhere teaches that knowledge of the Divine Being need be reached by every individual, through this or that argument. The Church is anxious about the *conclusions* to be drawn from visible facts, not about the *processes* of our ratiocination. She is not concerned with the mere mechanism of our thought. That often may be very imperfect.

Cardinal Billot's warning.

> "The way to the knowledge of God by the natural light of reason, from effects to their cause, from the things which have been made to their Author and Creator, leads us by reasoning which is called *a posteriori*—not however only by reasoning which is strictly scientific, but also by the reasoning that precedes all the rules of logic, and the reasoning which is employed by the illiterate and by uneducated people generally. For all men, when they come to the use of reason, possess the power of using spontaneous reasoning of this kind. . . . The knowledge which it gives is

> indeed of a confused character, but is certain and dwells in the soul as a 'habit.' The elaborated and explicit knowledge of God, which, as the result of study, does not spring so immediately from the fount of Nature, can be weakened by various kinds of sophisms. So the end of a strictly scientific demonstration is to meet and confute fallacies by showing clearly and distinctly the motives of this judgment of the intellect: *God exists.* All people, however, do not apprehend the force of proof of this character. Consequently, the knowledge derived from reason concerning the Existence of God, is imperfect; it is however amply sufficient to induce us, as prudent persons, to embrace faith [in God], and to know that we are bound to believe."[1]

The Argument from Motion, and from Necessity, and from Perfection, and from General Consent.

It is, therefore, well for mankind that, as there are many men and many minds, so there are many proofs of God's existence—besides those derived from *Causality* and *Design;* such for example are the arguments from the ubiquitous Law and Fact of *Motion* (this is held by many living scientists to be the strongest of all the proofs of the Divine Existence, and is the first of those given by St. Thomas Aquinas)—the argument from *Necessity* (that is to say, from the Contingent to the Absolute)—the argument from *Perfection* (that is from the ordered gradations to be found in Nature), and the argument from the *General Consent of Mankind*. For all these I would refer those of my readers who can read Latin to the *Summa*,[1] and all my readers to Mgr. Moyes.[2]

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[1] Billot, *De Deo Uno*, pp. 51, 52.

The Argument from Conscience.

But there remains one great evidence of the Divine Existence which I cannot pass over without some development. I refer to that Argument from *Conscience*, to which Cardinal Newman ascribed such weight.

This Moral Argument deserves the special attention of all those, who attempt to escape the force of the arguments from Causality and Design, by the adoption of a Pantheism which professes to regard the Universe as an Absolute Entity and its own Architect.

The experience of a Priest drawn from the Confessional makes it perfectly safe for him to assert, without fear that any man from his own personal experience will contradict the statement, that every rational being comes into this world with a sense of right and wrong. This sense may no doubt be almost obliterated, if its promptings be persistently ignored, but it is there, and its voice is heard, at least in the beginning of life. If wisely cultivated, it becomes more sensitive and more sure as life goes on. It is intended to be our guide to the end. Now this sense of right and wrong—the idea of *ought*—our conviction that certain things are good and that certain things are evil—carries with it a sense of responsibility—of accountability to the Author of our being. It is idle to attempt to dispose of this fact either by saying that right is the same as useful and wrong the same as painful, or by an appeal to heredity. Few signs of the times are more heartening than the total collapse of Herbert Spencer's reputation, and that of the school which identified the unique sense of conscience with the craving for "prolonged utility," and reduced the Moral Law to a mere dictate of selfish prudence. Nor does heredity dispose of the matter. For if it be argued that we have inherited our moral sense, we may fairly ask, who gave it to those who have preceded us—who implanted its first origin in the hearts of our fathers? In any case it is there *now*.

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[1] I., Qu. I., Art. 3.

[2] *Op. cit.*

This argument may be stated in a general form somewhat as follows:

The Existence of a Moral Law, that is, of a Law commanding right and forbidding wrong, is an evident fact which cannot be explained away. But the existence of a Law of right and wrong carries with it the existence of an absolutely holy Being, who is the Foundation and Sanction of that Law. Therefore, such a Being exists.

By the Moral Law we here mean a definite command, unconditional, necessary, absolute, and incumbent on all conceivable free and intelligent creatures. Now, it is only a Being of supreme authority who can impose an unconditional Law such as all men acknowledge in their hearts as binding on their consciences.

Similarly, we see at once that a Being who imposes His Law on all mankind without exception—and such a Lawgiver is the author of the Moral Law—is of Infinite Intelligence, for no other can have authority to command men universally.

Finally, this Lawgiver is infinitely holy, for if He were to deflect from Holiness, the obligation of His Law would cease.

Nor can it be maintained that the existence of the Law and Lawgiver whom we here presuppose is due to imagination, for imagination has not the binding force which normal men and women agree in ascribing to the Moral Law.

"Conscience," writes Kant, "by making Morality consist in conformity to a Law places its very essence in *submission.* In submission then *to whom?* Conscience points to an authority above the mind altogether. It does not claim for itself that it is infallible, that it is sufficient, or that it is independent, but bows to some authority beyond. It acknowledges a standard that is, and must be, right. It looks up for sanction and guidance. There might be a moral Idea without a moral Law. Imagination might construct an ideal of excellence, but imagination could not bind me to attain it. But I am bound to obey this Law. Who is it that can thus command me and all other beings?"[1]

When I have done wrong, no mortal eye may have seen the evil action. There may, perchance, be no possibility that any human being can ever know of my wickedness, otherwise than by my voluntary confession. But I know that I shall have one day to give an account of this deed of mine. I know that I have broken a Law of God. For a Law written in my heart involves a Lawgiver.

If the First Cause and Ultimate Reality were not a Holy God, the human conscience would be superior to, and in revolt against, its Cause and Source. If, however, the Cause came short of the Effect, the axiom of causality would be violated. Moreover, such an opposition between the Created Effect (the human conscience) and the First Cause of creation is excluded by the Unity of Being as a whole. Therefore, human morality must exist "eminently" (that is in a higher degree) in the First Cause, who is God.

Furthermore, I have a deeply-rooted conviction that good ought to be rewarded and evil punished. Consequently, if there were no means of punishing moral evil, God in creating men would have overleapt Himself, providing His creatures with a sense without its corresponding sanction. But this is impossible. We know well that there is some deeper punishment for evil and some richer reward for virtue than anything we can receive here.

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[1] Epitome of an argument of Kant's, *Dublin Review*, 1872, p. 280.

In other words:

"Those who will come to God must believe that God is, and that He is the Rewarder of them that search after Him."[1]

Having, then, arrived in our first chapter at the recognition of the two great elementary Truths, (1) *I am*, (2) *The world outside of me exists*, we have now by the use of Reason and Conscience, come to acknowledge further that (3) *God is*, and (4) that not only does He exist, but also that *there is a Moral Law*, and that *God is my Judge*.

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[1] Heb. xi. 6.

CHAPTER III

FAITH

In the two preceding chapters we have shown that every normal man may arrive at certainty concerning his own existence and that of the external world, especially through experience, and by the exercise of the Faculty of Memory. Moreover, through the use of his reasoning power he can arrive at knowledge concerning the Existence of God and the binding force of certain moral precepts of the Natural Law, which have been written by the Creator upon the hearts of all His responsible creatures. Now the question arises: Is further knowledge possible, outside the sphere of physical observation—in other words, can we arrive at supernatural Truth derived, through Faith, from Revelation, as well as at natural certainty derived, through Reason, from experience and the exercise of the faculties of our mind?

Experience.

Memory.

Reason.

The Law of Nature.

Supernatural Truth.

To this question the Catholic Church answers with an emphatic "*Yes.*" The Creator has given us Reason as the divinely appointed means of arriving at natural knowledge (including the natural knowledge of Himself). Faith is equally His Gift—by means of which we may arrive at knowledge of the Revelation which He has deigned to bestow upon mankind.

The natural and supernatural order.

As the Vatican Council teaches us:[1] "Since man absolutely depends upon God as His Creator and Lord, and created reason is altogether subject to Uncreated Truth, we are bound to render by Faith full submission of the intellect and will to God in His Revelation. Now, the Catholic Church professes that this Faith, which is the beginning of man's salvation, is a supernatural virtue, by which, under the influence, and with the aid, of the Grace of God, we believe those things which He has revealed to be true, not on account of their intrinsic truth as perceived by the natural light of reason, but on account of the Revelation of God, who can neither deceive nor be deceived."

Faith.

It is, then, through Divine Faith—that is by believing the Word of God—that we acquire a knowledge of supernatural truths to which we could never attain by means of the human reason.

Faith is either "*divine*" or "*human.*" By divine faith I believe the Word of God; by human faith I believe the word of some human being or beings.

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[1] *Constitutio Dogmatica de Fide Catholica,* Cap. III., *De Fide,* 8.

Outside the Catholic Church there is the widest misconception as to what Catholics mean by the word *Faith.* It is often imagined, even by men of the greatest intelligence and highest scientific attainments, that by Faith we understand a blind Faculty, which leads us to make unreasonable assumptions and causes us to believe, without being able to give any reasonable explanation as to why we believe.

Professor Huxley's View.

Thus, Professor Huxley wrote that science asks of her disciples one and one only Act of Faith—an Act of Faith in the Uniformity of Nature. By this statement it is evidently meant that we should accept the Fact of the Uniformity of Nature as a first principle, for which we can give no proof, and which we have to *assume* as the basis of all further argument. But, the instructed Catholic will assume nothing, excepting those metaphysical and mathematical axioms which are immediately seen by any sane man to be true—such, for example, as the statement that a thing cannot be and not be in the same manner at the same time, or that a straight line cannot enclose a space. The Uniformity of Nature (subject to occasional exceptions due to the direct action of the Creator) a Catholic does not *assume*, but *knows* to be a fact in consequence of a wide induction, such as is made by every man who has in any degree exercised his faculty of observation.

The dogmas of Christianity a Catholic does not *assume*, but *knows* to be true in consequence of the Word of God.

Faith opposed not to knowledge but to sight.

Faith, whether human or divine, is opposed to sight. It is "the proof of things that do not appear."[1] So far, however, from being opposed to knowledge, it is one of the chief sources of knowledge.

The source of human knowledge.

This becomes quite clear directly we analyse the source of our knowledge of all those things which we can possibly know. We shall then find that knowledge can only come to the human mind in one of three ways.

Abstract reasoning.

(1) Some facts are made known to us by mathematical reasonings, such for example are the conclusions of Euclid.

The Bodily Senses.

(2) Many things we know *through our senses.* Thus do we know the faces of our friends, the features of a country landscape with which we are familiar, the aspect of a street in which we live. But

Testimony.

(3) The vast bulk of our knowledge we have acquired neither by mathematical reasoning, nor through the evidence of our senses, but solely on the testimony of other people, that is to say by *faith.* In this way we have become acquainted with the great facts of history, with much

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[1] Heb. xi.

of our geographical knowledge, with a thousand truths (scientific and other) which day by day, on the word of other men, we store in our minds, without any possibility of personal verification. Nor is the thought of possible verification present to our minds as a motive of belief.

I am as certain that the battle of Waterloo was fought in the month of June in the year 1815, as I am that I am writing at this moment with a fountain-pen. The first fact I know on *faith;* the second by *the testimony of my eyes and hand.*

Validity of Testimony.

I no more doubt the positive statement of a friend whom I know that I can trust, even though he may perhaps be under a cloud, and may assure me of things in themselves most unlikely to have occurred, than I doubt the evidence of my own senses.

No man can conduct the business of life for a single day excepting on the principle that he must believe—on subjects within their own powers of observation—simply upon their word—and believe implicitly—those of his fellows who, he has reason to think, are worthy of credence. I can reasonably ground *my* certainty on *their* certainty.

Human and

We must, however, always remember that, when there is question of *human faith*, very often our certainty is no more than a greater or less high degree of probability. Very often we know that the man on whose word we believe may have been himself mistaken, whilst sometimes we may have a lurking fear that he may be deceiving us.

Divine Faith.

But when, by the exercise of divine Faith, we believe a truth on the Word of God, we know that our certainty should be absolute. Once I am convinced that Christ is what He claimed to be—God, I can no longer hesitate. God can neither deceive nor be deceived. When He has spoken, I dare no longer doubt. This is the meaning of the Apostle when he wrote: "If the testimony of man be great, the testimony of God is greater."[1] If it is often reasonable to believe our fellow-man, even when he may state something that, on other grounds, seems highly improbable, it is still more reasonable always to believe God, and this quite independently of any intrinsic likelihood of that which God may teach.

The Grounds of Faith.

The only question that a man may fairly ask before he submits his mind and will to a Religion which claims to be God's Revelation—if he would act according to the right exercise of his reason—is this: "Is it indeed God's Revelation? Has God actually taught this fact? Has God spoken?" And so we come to what are known to Theologians as the *Præambula Fidei*, or the Grounds of the Truth of Christianity.

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[1] 1 John v. 9.

Concerning these *Præambula Fidei* the Vatican Council teaches as follows:[1] "In order that the obedience of our Faith should be in accordance with Reason, God has willed to join to the interior help of His Holy Spirit, external proofs of His Revelation—namely, divine Facts,—and especially miracles and prophecies, which, inasmuch as they luminously manifest the Omnipotence and Infinite Knowledge of God, are most certain proofs of His Revelation, and are suited to the intelligence of all men. On this account both Moses and the Prophets, and also above all Christ our Lord, have performed quite undoubted miracles and given us prophecies. Moreover of the Apostles we read: 'They went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming their word by the marvels which followed it.'[2] . . . Moreover, the Church herself is, of herself, by reason of her wonderful growth, her conspicuous Holiness, and ceaseless fruitfulness in all good works, by reason of her world-wide unity and unconquerable persistence, both a perpetual motive of credibility and an unanswerable witness to her embassy from God."

In the next chapter of this great Dogmatic Constitution concerning Faith, the Vatican Council added these words:[3] "And when Reason, aided by

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[1] *Constitutio Dogmatica de Fide Catholica*, Cap. III., *De Fide*, 9-12.

[2] Mark xvi. 20.

[3] Cap. IV., *De Fide et Ratione*, 15.

Faith, earnestly, devoutly and soberly seeks from God a certain understanding of [the Christian] Mysteries, she obtains this both from an analogy between them and the things which she learns by use of the natural faculties, and from the interdependence of [the Christian] Mysteries upon one another, and their connection with the last end of Man."

Their Variety.

It should, however, be observed that these "Grounds of Faith," though all in themselves valid, will not all carry the same measure of conviction to various minds. One man will be more impressed by the Gospel accounts of the Miracles of Christ, and of His Resurrection at the beginning of Christianity; another by the Miracles of Lourdes, or by the spectacle of the Catholic Church at the present day. One man will be more moved by the thought of the marvellous propagation of Catholicism in the first centuries of Christianity; another by the thought of her unity throughout the world, as he may now see it in any quarter of the globe.

Their cumulative force.

Moreover, we must always remember that these proofs are essentially cumulative in their force. One lends strength to its fellow, until the whole result, when viewed not in isolation but in conjunction, becomes almost overwhelming in its appeal to the intellect.

Above all, it should never be forgotten that they are all *external* evidences. They are *not* meant by God, even when viewed together, to stand alone. They *are* intended to give intellectual corroboration and support to that *internal* evidence which (as may be learned from experience) God gives to the heart and conscience—to the soul of every man who will come to the Problem of Christianity—in other words, to the Problem of Christ—with an unbiassed mind, and an honest desire to know the truth at all costs—evidence bestowed in fullest measure upon all, who having already received the grace to believe in Christ, *use* the religion which Christ has left upon this earth.

They are addressed to the intellect.

To sum up the conclusions at which we have arrived so far in our investigation. By the use of natural reason we have learned to believe in the Existence of God, and have also come to see that it is reasonable for man, relying upon God's Wisdom and Faithfulness, to believe by Faith (which is the link between natural and supernatural religion) whatever Truths God may have revealed to His responsible creatures.[1]

Conclusion.

The Christian Revelation.

Christianity claims to have received such a Revelation from God through Christ, His Ambassador to men. "What is Truth?"[1] asked Pilate. "For this have I come into the world," answered Jesus of Nazareth, "to bear witness to the Truth."[2] He also said, "I am the Truth," and St. John declares that "Grace and Truth" (supernatural strength for the will and supernatural light for the mind) "have come through Jesus Christ."

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[1] Faith may also give us knowledge of truths which we have already learned in a different manner.

The Catholic Church assures her children that this claim can be shown to be trustworthy—that Christ came into the world to appeal to every man and to every side of man—consequently to man's intellect as well as to his heart—to give mental satisfaction as well as pardon for sin—that He bore His title-deeds to our Faith in Him in His Hands—that we can examine them at this hour, and shall not be disappointed—that thus to examine does not argue any want of confidence in His Word, for in so acting we are only acting in accordance with His Will, who desires that we should render unto Him "a *reasonable* service." Only let no man shirk or obscure the issue. If Christ be what He claimed to be, it is the height of unreason to refuse to believe in Christ—the height of unreason to refuse to believe what Christ has taught. When once we know that Christ is the Divine Teacher of Truths which, apart from His teaching, we could never know, it follows inevitably that Christianity—the Christianity left by Christ on earth, to which He guaranteed the assistance of His Spirit to the end of time—is true, absolutely, in the whole content of its message to mankind.

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[1] John xviii. 38.

[2] John xviii. 37.

Here there can be no question of degree. It is nothing, or it is all.

CHAPTER IV

THE ARGUMENT FROM PROPHECY TO THE TRUTH OF CHRISTIANITY

Natural and

We have seen that the normal use of the human reason suffices to prove the existence of the Supreme Creator; whilst the human conscience warns each individual who will heed its warnings that it is his duty, as the rational creature of God, to render Him service by observing the Law which He has written on the tablets of men's hearts. This is natural religion.

Super-natural religion.

We now approach the question of religion which claims to be supernatural, teaching us truths, to which unaided reason could never attain. We shall confine our investigation to Christianity, since anyone born and educated in a Christian country, who rejects the authority of Christ, will hardly turn elsewhere with satisfaction for his intellect; moreover if the Christian Religion be proved to be true, rival religions, *so far as they contradict the Christian Revelation*, are thereby proved to be false.

"Discussi, fateor, sectas Antonius omnes.
Plurima quæsivi, per singula quæque cucurri.
Sed nihil inveni melius quam credere Christo." [1]

These words written in the third or fourth century after Christ express the experience of an increasing number of souls to-day in our restless age, who search and search—only, thank God, in the end to confess their unshaken belief in Christ.

The Catholic Church teaches, not that we can prove the truth of Christian doctrines separately, since they depend for their ultimate verification simply upon the word and authority of Christ, but that it can be shown by plain and adequate proofs that Christ is a divine Messenger, to whose teaching it is reasonable to render the assent of the mind and the obedience of the will.

Our next step, therefore, is to examine these proofs or external evidences of the Truth of Christianity. The first which we have to consider is Prophecy.

Prophecy.

By *Prophecy* we understand *the prediction of a future event which cannot be known by any created intelligence through any natural cause.* If even one such prediction has ever been made, it is manifest, from the very terms of our definition, that this prediction comes from the Creator. It is, therefore, a sign of Divine intervention, one of those ways in which God, granted the fact and truth of the prophecy, is pleased to communicate with His creatures. The predictions of future events, which are held by Christians to be true Prophecies, and as such to have a real apologetic value, may be divided into three classes.

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[1] Migne, P. L., vol. v., p. 261.

Three classes of Prophecies.

I. The *General* Prophecies of the Jewish Prophets. So far as these can be shown to have been verified, they bear witness to the Law and the Prophets—to the truth of that Jewish Religion which was intended to be "the schoolmaster to lead men to Christ."[1]

II. The *Special* Prophecies concerning the Messias and, signally, concerning His Passion. These Prophecies bear witness directly to Jesus Christ.

III. The Prophecies of Christ recorded in the New Testament—to which may be added a great Prophecy of His Blessed Mother.

With regard to I. and II. the space at my disposal and the plan of this book will only enable me to deal with them in the most summary manner. Anyone who wishes to see them examined in detail may find this work done admirably by Colonel Turton.[2]

I. *The General Prophecies of the Jewish Prophets.*

General Prophecies.

It is undeniable that the Jewish Prophets predicted unequivocally (amongst other facts of history):

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[1] Gal. iii. 24.

[2] *The Truth of Christianity*, pp. 227-244; 467-494.

(*a*) The desolation of Assyria and Babylonia.[1]

(*b*) The degradation of Egypt.[2]

(*c*) The dispersion of the Jews, who when scattered amongst the various nations of the world, were still to preserve their distinctive racial characteristics.[3]

It is also undeniable and matter of common knowledge that these predictions have been fulfilled with extraordinary accuracy, often even in the most minute particulars.[4]

Moreover, so exact is the correspondence between the event and the prediction in at least eight other definite prophecies of specific events[5] to be found in the Old Testament, that those who disbelieve in the reality and truth of the Jewish Prophecies have no alternative but to assert that they were all written after the event. I shall venture here to quote the words of Colonel Turton, which express the matter far more forcibly than any which I could substitute:

> "At this lapse of time it is difficult to prove or disprove such a statement [that the Jewish Prophecies were written after the event which they claim to foretell]. But it must be remembered that to say that any apparent prophecies were written

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[1] Isa. viii. 19-22; Jer. l. 13, 39, 40; li. 26, 37, 43; Nah. iii. 7; Zeph. ii. 13-15.

[2] Ezek. xxix. 11-13; xxix. 15; xxx. 7, 13-16, 23, 26; Jer. xlvi. 19.

[3] Deut. iv. 27; xxviii. 25, 37, 46, 48, 64; Lev. xxvi. 33; Ezek. xxii. 15; Jer. ix. 16; xxiv. 9; xxix. 18; Hos. ix. 17; Neh. i. 8.

[4] *Cf.* Turton, *op. cit.*, pp. 227-238.

[5] *Id.*, pp. 238-240.

after the event is not merely to destroy their superhuman character, and bring them down to the level of ordinary writings, but far below it. For ordinary writings do not contain wilful misstatements, and yet every pretended prophecy written after the event cannot possibly be regarded in any other light. The choice then lies between *real prophecies* and *wilful forgeries.* There is no other alternative. And bearing this in mind, we must ask, is it likely that men of such high moral character as the Hebrew Prophets —men who declared that they spoke in the Name of God—should have been guilty of such gross imposture? Is it likely that, if guilty of it, they should have been able to pass it off successfully on the whole Jewish nation? And is it likely that they should have had any sufficient motive to induce them to make the attempt.

"Moreover, many of these prophecies are stated to have been made *in public*, and to have been notorious and well known long before their fulfilment. And it is hard to see how this could have been asserted unless it was the case, or how it could have been the case unless they (*i.e.*, these prophecies) were superhuman.

"It should also be noticed that in Deuteronomy the occurrence of some definite and specific event is given as the *test* of a Prophet, and the later Prophets appeal to this very test. Thus Isaiah challenges the false Prophets to foretell future events, and repeatedly declares that this was the mark of a true Prophet.[1] And it seems inconceivable that men should thus court defeat by themselves proposing a test which would have shown that they were nothing more than impostors. And yet this would have been the case if all their so-called prophecies had been uttered after the events."[1]

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[1] Deut. xviii. 22; Isa. xli. 22; xliv. 8; xlviii. 3-5. See also Deut. xiii. 1-3.

II. *The distinctive Messianic Prophecies.*

The Messianic Prophecies.

With regard to these, at any rate, there can be no suggestion that they were written after the Birth and Death of Christ, for they were treasured in their Hebrew form by the Jews, who were their Librarians. Now it is quite certain that these enemies of our Lord Jesus Christ would never have permitted any interpolation in favour of His Claims which they were at the very moment engaged in bitterly opposing. Moreover we know that the Old Testament was translated into Greek, and that in this form (the Septuagint) it was spread through a great part of the world more than a hundred years before the coming of Christ.

Between these Prophecies and what we know of the Life—and particularly of the Passion—of Christ there is a correspondence which it is; to say the least, exceedingly difficult to ascribe to mere coincidence at least in every case. Once again we can only summarise.

Father Devivier, S.J., gives us twenty-two predictions of the Old Testament concerning the Messiah which were fulfilled in the Person of Christ.[1] I will content myself with calling the attention of my readers to eleven of the most notable.

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[1] Turton, *op. cit.*, pp. 241-242.

It was predicted of the Messiah that He should be

(1) A son of Abraham[2]—and

(2) of David;[3]

(3) of the tribe of Judah;[4]

(4) born of a Virgin,[5]

(5) in the town of Bethlehem;[6]

(6) and that He should honour the Temple with His Presence;[7]

(7) that He should be in name and fact Jesus or the *Saviour;*[8]

(8) Emmanuel or *God with us;*[9]

(9) Christ or the *Anointed;*[10]

(10) A priest according to the Order of Melchisedech;[11]

(11) The Wonderful, the Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Father of the world to come, the Prince of Peace.[12]

These predictions vary in their clearness and therefore in their force, but they were all fulfilled in Christ, as we read of Him in the Gospels, and their concentrated force is—it will be generally admitted—very great.

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[1] *Christian Apologetics,* vol. i., pp. 212, 213.

[2] Gen. xxii. 3.

[3] Isa. xi. 10; Jer. xxiii. 5; xxxiii. 15; Ps. lxxxviii., etc.

[4] Gen. xlix. 10.

[5] Isa. vii. 14; Ezek. xliv. 2.

[6] Mic. v. 2.

[7] Hag. ii. 8; Mal. iii. 1.

[8] Isa. li. 14; Hab. iii. 18.

[9] Isa. vii. 14.

[10] Lev. iv. 20, etc.

[11] Ps. cix. 4.

[12] Isa. ix. 6.

> "If only one man," writes Pascal, "had made a book of predictions concerning the time and manner of the coming of Jesus Christ, and if Jesus Christ had come in conformity with his prophecies—this would be of very great weight. But we have much more than this. There is a succession of men, who, during four thousand years, come, one after another, predicting this same event. A whole people announce Him, and subsist for four thousand years, in order to render as a body testimony of the certainties which they possess concerning Him, from which they can be turned by no menaces and by no persecution. This is something of far higher importance [than the predictions of any single individual].[1]

Two of these Prophecies speak of the coming Messiah as God.

We will now consider five of the Messianic predictions in some detail. But first I would observe that it is a very remarkable fact that, notwithstanding their consistent Monotheism, two, at least, of the great Messianic prophets speak of the coming Saviour in terms that can only rightly be applied to God:

Isaiah ix. 6.

(1) "*For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the Government shall be upon His Shoulder; and His Name shall be called Wonderful, the Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Father of the World to come, the Prince of Peace.*"

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[1] *Pensées de Pascal*, p. 220, French Edition (Paris, 1861).

I cannot do better than quote Colonel Turton's comment on these familiar and yet most wonderful words:[1]

> "Here we have a plain statement of the Divinity of One who should be born a Child. The two words translated *Mighty God* are incapable of any other translation, and no other is suggested for them in the margin of either the Authorised or Revised Version; while the same two words occur in the next chapter where they plainly mean *Mighty God* and nothing else. Moreover the term *Everlasting Father* is literally *Father of Eternity* and means *The Eternal One.* This is another Divine Title, and does not conflict with the Christian doctrine that it was the Son, and not the Father, who became Incarnate. While the following words that 'of the increase of His Government *there shall be no end'*; and that it should be established *for ever* also point to a Divine Ruler, in spite of the reference to David's Throne. And it is significant that a few verses before it is implied that the Ministry of this future Messiah should commence in the land of Zabulon and Naphthali, by the Sea of Galilee; where as a matter of fact Christ's Ministry did commence."[2]

Micah v. 2. (2) "*But thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, which art little to be among the thousands of Judah, out of thee shall One come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; and His goings forth are from the beginning, from everlasting.*"

In these words of the Prophet Micah we have a prophecy of the birth of One who had existed *from everlasting;* thus showing the Pre-existence and Divinity of the Messiah, who as Man was to be born at Bethlehem, who as God was *from everlasting—from the days of Eternity.*

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[1] *The Truth of Christianity*, p. 488.

[2] Isa. ix. 1, 2.

Isaiah liii.

(3) The Prophecy of the Passion of the Messiah to be found in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah is so marvellous in its detailed accomplishment in the Sufferings of Jesus Christ, that I need hardly do more than copy it out and let it speak for itself:

"Behold My Servant shall deal wisely. He shall be exalted and lifted up and shall be very high . . . He hath no form nor comeliness, and when we see Him there is no beauty that we should desire Him. *He was despised and rejected of men, a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief,* and as one from whom men hide their face was He despised, and we esteemed Him not. *Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.* Yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. *But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our Peace was upon Him, and with His Stripes we are healed.* All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, yet He humbled Himself and opened not His Mouth; as a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep that before her shearers is dumb; yea He opened not His Mouth. . . . And they made His Grave with the wicked [Christ was appointed to die, between two thieves, and doubtless it was intended that He should be buried with ordinary criminals[1]], and with the rich in His Death [for Joseph of Arimathea intervened, when in striking contrast with the circumstances of His Death and the designs of His enemies, He was buried by the 'rich' Joseph and Nicodemus with costly spices and in a rich man's tomb]. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief; when Thou shalt make His Soul an offering for sin, He shall see His Seed; He shall see of the travail of His Soul and shall be satisfied . . . He was numbered with the transgressors; yet He bore the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors."

The Prophecies of Zechariah.

(4) There are many prophecies in *Zechariah* which Christians believe on the authority of the Evangelists, and even of our Lord Himself, to apply to the Messiah, such as: "They shall look upon Him whom they have pierced,"[2] or again: "smite the Shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered."[3] The Christian applica-

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[1] Douay Version has "He was reputed with the wicked."

[2] Zech. xii. 10; *cf.* John xix. 37.

[3] Zech. xiii. 7; *cf.* Matt. xxvi. 31; Mark xiv. 27.

tion of some of these predictions may be disputed by an enquirer who is without the Christian Faith, and is destitute of belief in the inspiration of the New Testament. But there is one passage in Zechariah, which does seem to me to be of the greatest significance from whatever point of view it may be regarded: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: Behold thy King cometh unto thee. He is just and having salvation; and riding upon an ass, even upon a colt the foal of an ass."[1] Now, our Lord's entry into Jerusalem, riding upon a colt of an ass, when He was hailed as King, is recorded by all the Evangelists.[2] So it will hardly be objected that either St. Mark or St. Luke invented this incident in order to correspond with the prophecy, since neither of them quotes the prophecy at all in connection with the incident. They merely state the regal entry upon the foal of an ass as a fact. It must, therefore, be acknowledged to be an historical occurrence, supported by as strong evidence as any fact in our Lord's life, that He did enter the Holy City in the manner described in the Gospels. When this has once been recognised—and it will not, I think, be disputed—the significance and importance of the passage in Zechariah will be obvious. Its fulfilment can hardly be a coincidence.

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[1] Zech. ix. 9.

[2] Matt. xxi.; Mark xi.; Luke xix.; John xii.

(5) When we remember that in the great Messianic Psalm[1] the very words used by the Jews in mockery of Christ—"He trusted in the Lord that He would deliver Him—let Him save Him"—were predicted; that it was declared that His enemies should "dig His Hands and Feet," that they should "number (stretch out) all His Bones," "look and stare" upon Him, "part" His "garments amongst" them and that upon His "vesture they should cast lots," we pause in awe before this marvellous foretelling of the indignities heaped upon our Lord. The Jews themselves always regarded this Psalm as Messianic. Consequently, when it was quoted against them by the early Apologists of Christianity, they were driven to the desperate device of inventing a theory of two Messiahs, one suffering, the other triumphant.

Psalm xxi.

I would here venture to urge once more that it is most important always to bear in mind that the strongest force of the Argument from Prophecy is cumulative. This argument is impressive in proportion as it is regarded as a whole and not in detail. More or less plausible objections are urged against individual prophecies—indeed it is hardly too much to say that criticism rages over each separate text, but the whole phenomenon is unique in history.

Cumulative force of Prophecies.

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[1] Ps. xxii. (Douay Version, Ps. xxi.).

It is quite impossible to deny that the general effect of the Old Testament writings on the Jewish people was expectation of a Messiah. A proof of this statement—if proof be needed of that which will hardly be controverted—may be found in the apocalyptic literature round about the time of the Birth of Christ. No critic has attempted to question the fact that the writer of the Book of Enoch, for example, looked forward to the appearance on earth of a Messiah already existing in Heaven.

Book of Enoch.

> "Doubtless it is possible," writes Dr. Liddon, "to bid defiance alike to Jewish and to Christian interpreters, and to resolve upon seeing in the prophets only such a sense as may be consistent with the theoretical exigencies of Naturalism. It is possible to suggest that what looks like supernatural prediction is only a clever or chance farsightedness, and that expressions which literally anticipate a distant history are but the exuberance of poetry, which, from its very vagueness, happens to coincide with some feature, real or imagined, of the remote future. It is possible to avoid any frank acknowledgment of the imposing spectacle presented by converging and consentient lines of prophecy, and to refuse to consider the prophetic utterances, except in detail and one by one; as if forsooth Messianic prophecy were an intellectual enemy whose forces must be divided by the criticism that would conquer it. It is possible, alas! even for accomplished scholarship so fretfully to carp at each instance of

pure prediction in the Bible, to nibble away the beauty and dim the lustre of each leading utterance with such persevering industry, as at length to persuade itself that the predictive element in Scripture is insignificantly small, or even that it does not exist at all. That modern criticism of this temper should refuse to accept the prophetic witness to the Divinity of the Messiah, is more to be regretted than to be wondered at. And yet, if it were seriously supposed that such criticism had succeeded in blotting out all reference to the Godhead of Christ from the pages of the Old Testament, we should still have to encounter and to explain that massive testimony to the Messianic belief which lives on in the Rabbinical literature; since that literature, whatever be the date of particular existing treatises, contains traditions, neither few nor indistinct, of indisputable antiquity. In that literature nothing is plainer than that the ancient Jews believed the expected Messiah to be Divine. It cannot be pretended that this belief came from without, from the schools of Alexandria, or from the teaching of Zoroaster. It was notoriously based upon the language of the Prophets and Psalmists. And we of to-day, even with our improved but strictly mechanical apparatus of grammar and dictionary, can scarcely pretend to correct the early unprejudiced interpretation of men who read the Old Testament with at least as much instinctive insight into the meaning of its archaic language, and of its older forms of thought and of feeling, as an Englishman in this generation can command when he applies himself to the study of Shakespeare or of Milton."[1]

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[1] Bampton Lectures, p. 89.

The entire dispensation of the Old Law, in itself so strikingly incomplete, is a type of a perfect dispensation to come, and is pervaded throughout by an ever-increasing expectancy.

"To Him," said St. Peter to the Jews, "all the Prophets bear their testimony. Of a truth this Man is the Son of God."[1]

Christ Himself appealed to the Jewish prophecies in support of His claims. "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things," He once asked His Disciples, "and so to enter into His Glory? And beginning from Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things that were concerning Him."[2] Previously He had said to the Jews: "Search the Scriptures, for these are they that give testimony of Me."[3]

The general expectation of the Messiah on the part of the Jews is taken for granted by the New Testament writers. This expectation rested on the prophetic passages in the Old Testament. Nothing can be more untrue than to imagine that the Messianic nature of these passages is a discovery after their fulfilment.

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[1] Acts x. 43.

[2] Luke xxiv. 26, 27.

[3] John v. 39.

III.

Our Lord appealed also to the fulfilment of His own predictions:

The Prophecies of Christ.

"At present I tell you before it come to pass, that when it shall come to pass you may believe that I am the Messiah."[1]

We will therefore glance at some of the prophecies recorded in the Gospels to have been made by Him whom Christians believe to have been not only the Term of all Messianic Prophecy, but also Himself the King and Master and Chief of all the Prophets, whom His Spirit had inspired from the beginning.

I will set down the words in which some of our Lord's predictions are recorded by the Evangelist in juxtaposition with those in which their fulfilment is narrated.

(1) *Christ foretold with regard to Himself:*

His Passion and Death.

Christ Prophesied His Passion and Death.

On three separate occasions—after the confession of Peter,[2] after the cure of the possessed man,[3] after the parable of the labourers who were sent into the vineyard[4]—

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[1] John xiii. 19.

[2] Matt. xvi. 20, 23; Mark vii. 30-33; Luke ix. 21-22.

[3] Matt. xviii. 21-22; Mark ix. 29-31; Luke ix. 44-45.

[4] Matt. xx. 17-19; Mark x. 32-34; Luke xviii. 31-34.

"The Son of Man shall be given up by the Chief Priests and by the Scribes and Elders, and they shall condemn Him to death, and shall deliver Him up to the Gentiles, and shall mock Him, and spit upon Him, and shall scourge Him, and shall slay Him, and on the third day He shall rise again." Thus St. Mark.[1] St. Matthew adds a specific prophecy of the Crucifixion.[2]

"Holding Jesus they brought Him to Caiaphas the Chief Priest, where the Scribes and Elders had met together . . . who all condemned Him as guilty of death . . . they brought Him bound and delivered Him up to Pontius Pilate . . . who scourged Jesus and gave Him back to them that they might crucify Him . . . and spitting upon Him they took a reed and struck His Head."[3]

(2) *Christ foretold with regard to His Disciples:*

(*a*) *Their Flight.*

The flight of His Disciples.

"You shall be scandalised in that night. It has been written: I will smite the Shepherd and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered. But after I have risen I will go before you into Galilee."[4]

"Then all the Disciples left Him and fled. . . . But the Eleven Disciples went into Galilee to the mountain where Jesus had appointed unto them."[5]

(*b*) *The triple denial by Simon Peter.*

The Denial by Peter.

"Amen I say unto thee that this night, before the cock crow, thou wilt deny Me thrice."[6]

"But he began to curse and to swear. 'I know not this Man of whom you speak.' And at once the cock crew a second time."[7]

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[1] Mark x. 33.

[2] Matt. xx. 17-19.

[3] Matt. xxvi. 57; xxvii. 2, 26, 30; Mark xiv. 64.

[4] Matt. xxvi. 31.

[5] Matt. xxvi. 56; xxviii. 26.

[6] Matt. xxvi. 34; Mark xiv. 30; Luke xxii. 34; John xiii. 38.

[7] Mark xiv. 71.

(*c*) *The betrayal by Judas Iscariot.*

The Betrayal by Judas.

"Amen I say to you that one of you will betray Me. . . . And Judas who betrayed Him, answered: 'Is it I, Lord?' And He replied: 'Thou hast said it.'"[1]

"Whilst He was yet speaking, there came Judas, one of the Twelve, and with him a great band with swords and staves."[2]

(*d*) *The Persecution of the Apostles.*

The Persecution of the Apostles.

"They shall deliver you up in their Councils, and in their Synagogues they shall scourge you, and you shall be brought before Rulers and Kings for My sake to witness to them and to the Gentiles."[3]

"And they laid hands upon them and cast them into prison. . . . And, summoning the Apostles they scourged them and forbade them altogether to speak in the Name of Jesus."[4]

(3) *Christ foretold with regard to the Apostolic Church:*

(*a*) *The Descent of the Holy Spirit.*

The Descent of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost.

"You shall receive the strength of the Holy Spirit upon you, and you shall be witnesses unto Me in all Judæa and Samaria, and to the uttermost bounds of the earth."[5]

"They were filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak in various tongues, as the Holy Spirit gave them utterance."[6]

We know that subsequently the Apostles dispersed and bore witness to Christ not only in Judæa and Samaria, but also in various distant parts of the world.

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[1] Matt. xxvi. 21, 25; Mark xiv. 20; Luke xiii. 18; John xxii. 21.

[2] Matt. xxvi. 47-49.

[3] Matt. x. 17-18.

[4] Acts iv. 1-8; v. 17-41, etc.

[5] Acts i. 8.

[6] Acts ii. 4.

(b) Its future Destiny, Marks, and Heavenly Food.

The Life of His Church.

(*a*) "Thou art Peter and upon this Rock I will build My Church, and the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it"; (β) "Go, teach all nations, and I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world"; (γ) "The Kingdom of Heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took and cast into his garden"; (δ) "That they all may be One, as Thou Father in Me, and I in Thee; that they also may be One in Us"; (ε) "The Bread which I will give is My flesh for the Life of the world."[1]

These predictions were fulfilled in the (*a*) Indefectibility, (β) World-wide Character, (γ) Development and (δ) Unity of the Catholic Church, and in (ε) The Blessed Sacrament of the Altar.

These Prophecies were not invented by the Evangelists.

It has been suggested by some sceptics that the prophecies recorded in the Gospels as having been uttered by Christ with regard to such incidents as the Denial by Peter and the Betrayal by Judas were invented by the Evangelists and inserted in their narrative after the events had actually happened. The futility of this suggestion will be manifest directly we remember whom it involves in the charge of wicked and purposeless fraud. The

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[1] Matt. xvi. 18; xxviii. 19, 24; Luke xiii. 19; John vi. 52; xviii. 21. The fulfilment of the prophetic promises of Christ with regard to His Church is discussed in the tenth chapter of this book.

Apostles were all present when Jesus Christ—so we read in each of the four Gospels—declared that one of them would deny and that another would betray Him. The statement that He thus spoke emanated from them, and for it they are all responsible, since none of them repudiated it when it was recorded by the Evangelists. They all, save Judas Iscariot, gave their lives for Christ, remembering how His Words had been accomplished. If anyone is prepared to maintain that such men as these lent themselves as accomplices to deliberate misstatements concerning the sayings of their Master, whom they believed to be also their Judge, he shows himself singularly ignorant of the characters of men. A martyr, with nothing to gain for himself by his self-sacrifice, will no more lie about the Lord for whom he sheds his blood, than will a debauchee, yet in his sins, sacrifice himself for the honour of his victim. "Our testimony," wrote one of these first Apostles of Christ, "is true."[1] Hardly will anyone be found to gainsay this statement, at least with regard to the Apostle's own personal belief in its truth.

Christ's Prophecy concerning the Destruction of Jerusalem.

Christ also predicted in most emphatic and solemn words, the fate of Jerusalem. Now, the fact that whilst Titus was still besieging the city—three years before its actual destruction—the Christians in Jerusalem, mindful of the prophecy of Christ, fled across the Jordan into the town of Pella,[1] precludes the possibility of maintaining that in this case the record of the prediction is posterior to its fulfilment. We may, therefore, without hesitation point out the marvellous correspondence between the words of Christ and the facts of history. At a period when no man would have contemplated the destruction of Jerusalem or of its Temple as within the range of probability, Christ spoke thus:

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[1] John xix. 35; xxi. 24.

"And when you shall see Jerusalem compassed about with an army, then know that the desolation thereof is at hand. Then let those who are in Judæa flee to the mountains; and those who are in the midst thereof depart out . . . and they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captives into all nations, and Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles." [2]

And again: "When He drew near, seeing the city, He wept over it, saying: 'If thou also hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are to thy peace, but now they are hidden from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, and thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round and straiten thee on every side, and beat thee flat to the ground, and thy children who are in thee, and they shall not leave a stone upon a stone, because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation.' "[1]

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[1] *Cf.* Eusebius iii. 5; St. Epiphanius, *Hæres.*, xxix. 7.

[2] Luke xxi. 20-24.

And specifically of the Temple: "As He was going out of the Temple, one of His Disciples said to Him: 'Master, what manner of stones and what buildings are here!' And Jesus answering said to him: 'Seest thou all these great buildings? There shall not be left a stone upon a stone that shall not be thrown down.' "[2]

Fulfilment of this Prophecy.

The Jewish historian Josephus tells us how these predictions were fulfilled to the letter. The Jews, instigated by false prophets, rose against the Roman power. Vespasian invaded Galilee, but on his accession to the Imperial Throne left the conduct of the campaign in Palestine to his son Titus. Titus pitched his camp upon Mount Olivet, and "cast a trench" about Jerusalem. Finally the Holy City was taken by storm, and razed to the ground. We read that Titus had given the strictest orders that the Temple where, after the capture of the City, the surviving combatants still defended themselves, should be saved from the general destruction. Notwithstanding this command, a soldier seized a torch and threw it into the Temple, of which soon there remained only a mass of ashes. Thus were the Words of Jesus Christ fulfilled. "Not a stone remained upon a stone." The Temple, the sacrifices, the legal priesthood, the distinction of tribes all disappeared before the Roman sword. Jerusalem had perished, for she knew not the day of her visitation.

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[1] Luke xix. 41-44.

[2] Mark xiii. 1, 2.

Centuries passed, and Julian the Apostate determined to stultify the words of Christ. With this end in view, he ordered the rebuilding of the Temple. Ammianus Marcellinus, himself a Pagan, a friend of Julian, and an officer in the Imperial Army, has left us the following account:

> "Whilst Alipinus, assisted by the Governor of the Province, was urging on the work with tireless energy, formidable globes of fire arose from the midst of the foundations; they frequently exploded over the workmen, wounding many of them. Sometimes they made the ground unapproachable. Finally this conquering fire, continuing to hurl itself with fierceness upon the workmen as if resolved to disperse them, compelled them to abandon the undertaking."

Once again the Galilean had conquered His foes.

Prophecy of Christ with regard to the woman that was a sinner.

There is one other prophecy of Christ to which we will call attention. We read in St. Mark's Gospel that "when He was in Bethania, in the house of Simon the leper, and was at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of precious spikenard; and, breaking the alabaster box, she poured it upon His head . . . but Jesus said . . . Amen I say to you, wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached in the whole world, this also which she hath done shall be told as a memorial of her."[1] What could have seemed more unlikely of fulfilment at that time? Yet it is a simple fact that wheresoever the Gospel of Christ is preached, the deed of Mary Magdalene is held in loving veneration. There can be no doubt that it will be told "as a memorial of her" even to the end of time.

Prophecy of Our Lady.

Moreover, as God gave the gift of Prophecy to His servants before the coming of Christ, so Catholics believe that from time to time the same gift has been bestowed upon the Saints of the New Law. And pre-eminent amongst all the Saints is the Virgin Most Holy whom all generations salute as Blessed amongst women—the Queen of all the Prophets.

We are, therefore, in no way surprised to find in the New Testament an astounding prophecy attributed to Mary the Mother of Jesus—astounding in its scope, in the circumstances of its utterance, above all in its accomplishment. St. Luke tells us that the Maid of Nazareth, to whom Gabriel had declared that "the Holy Ghost should come upon her, and that the power of the Most High should overshadow her, and that the Holy One who should be born of her should be the Son of God, went up with haste into the hill-country, into a city of Juda. And she entered into the house of Zachary and saluted her cousin Elizabeth. And it came to pass that when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the infant [the unborn Baptist] leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost. And she cried out with a loud voice and said: 'Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the Fruit of thy womb. And whence is this unto me that the Mother of my Lord should come unto me? For behold as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed art thou that hast believed, because those things shall be accomplished which were spoken to thee by the Lord.' And Mary said: . . . '*Behold from henceforth all generations shall call me Blessed.*'"[1]

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[1] Mark xiv. 3-9; *cf.* Matt. xxvi. 13.

Now here is a most definite prophecy. It was recorded in the very first "generation"—long before it could be fulfilled. If Christianity be not true, who was Mary of Nazareth? Be it written with all reverence—written for her greater honour: If she be not that which she is—the Great Mother of the Incarnate God—she was but a village maiden, subject to an extraordinary delusion—in this delusion, moreover, encouraged by her aged cousin—in that case herself subject to delusions, if possible more extraordinary still. Under these circumstances, Mary makes her wondrous prophecy. All generations were to call her Blessed. Is there anything in all history comparable to this? Has any other maiden spoken thus of herself? Were any other young woman thus to speak, she would be rightly put under some sort of restraint. Nothing justifies such a prophecy, save its fulfilment. But that this prophecy has been absolutely fulfilled, no man will deny. All generations—each generation as it has come and gone—has called her Blessed—Blessed pre-eminently—*the* Blessed amongst women—"the Blessed Virgin Mary." And this not amongst Christians only. The very Mohammedans, who are ignorant of the name of the mother of their own Prophet, have told me that they venerate "Mary, the Blessed Mother of Christ." And (putting to shame some so-called Christians) they know and declare that she, alone amongst women, was a Virgin-Mother—thus ascribing to her a miraculous privilege which they have never claimed for the mother of Mohammed.

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[1] Luke i. 39-46.

If Mary's prophecy—fulfilled as it is to-day the world wide over—stood alone, it would suffice to prove, by itself, the truth of Christianity.

If Christianity be not true, it is impossible to account for the veneration given to Mary the Virgin.

She stands in a category and place apart. No other woman in the world's long history has ever been placed near to her in the esteem and love of men. And this through long ages. Her prophecy is fulfilled before our eyes to-day in every Catholic Church, as the Hail Mary is repeated by priest and people—in almost every Christian home, as mothers teach their little children to call the Mother of Jesus Blessed above all women—repeating after twenty centuries the words of Gabriel, and of Elizabeth, and words that are Mary's own. And that which is taught to our children at this hour will still be taught to the generations yet unborn. All generations shall arise in their turn and call Her Blessed.

CHAPTER V

THE EVIDENCE FROM MIRACLES—THEIR POSSIBILITY

Modern Thinkers and the evidential force of Miracles.

"Of course it is unfashionable to treat miracles as evidence nowadays. We believe Christianity in spite of the miracles which it involves, not because of the miracles which involve it."[1] Thus does Mr. Knox sum up the attitude of a handful of "modern thinkers" towards the Miraculous, and specifically towards the miracles recorded in the Gospels. Now, whatever may be considered by some people to be the advantages of a belief in Christianity in spite of the miracles of Christ, most certainly this is not the belief demanded by Christ Himself.

Christ appealed to His Miracles as evidence for Truth of His Mission.

For not only did Christ work miracles throughout the whole course of His Public Ministry, but also He insisted on their evidential force; again and again appealing to His "Works"—Works which were evidently above the power of man to perform—as proofs of His divine

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[1] *Some Loose Stones*, p. 63.

Mission:[1] "The blind see, the lame walk, the dumb speak, the dead rise again."[2] On hearing of the illness of Lazarus, He deliberately stayed away for the moment, and on hearing of his death, said to the disciples: "For your sakes I am glad that I was not there, that you may believe," whilst, addressing His Heavenly Father, He expressly declared that He had raised Lazarus from the dead in order that those who witnessed that wonder might believe that "Thou hast sent Me."[3] On several occasions He promised that He would give a final proof of His right to claim faith from men by raising His Body from the grave.[4]

The Apostles made the same appeal to Miracles.

In like manner the Apostles, from the very beginning of the Christian Dispensation, claimed to work miracles in proof of the Revelation which they asserted that they had received from God. Of such miracles the whole Book of the Acts is one long record.

The very shadow of Peter cured the sick[5]—as did "handkerchiefs and aprons brought from the body of Paul. And, by the hand of Paul, God wrought more than common miracles."[6] The Prince of the Apostles, like his Master—but in his Master's Name

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[1] Matt. ix. 6; xi. 5; xiii. 8; John x. 38; xiv. 12, etc.

[2] Luke vii. 22.

[3] John xi. 42. With regard to the authority of St. John's Gospel, *cf.* p. 101.

[4] Matt. xii. 40.

[5] Acts v. 15.

[6] Acts xix. 11-12.

—raised the dead to life. "And it was made known through Joppa and many believed in the Lord."[1]

Above all to the Resurrection of Christ.

Above all, our first fathers in the Faith constantly appealed to the Resurrection of Christ from the dead, as the very foundation of the hopes inspired by Christianity.[2] "If Christ hath not been raised," cried the Apostle of the Gentiles, "then is our preaching in vain."[3]

Inconsistence of some Modern Thinkers.

All this is so indisputable, that at first sight it seems hard to understand how men—and men of great ability and undoubted singleness of purpose—should make the attempt not merely to dispense with that evidence from miracles upon which, as they well know, the Founder of Christianity and His Apostles laid such stress, but even to substitute what is termed a non-miraculous Christianity for the historic Faith in the Miraculous until now accepted by all believers in Christ, without hesitation, as an integral part of their religion.

Its explanation.

The explanation of this perplexing inconsistency appears to lie in the fact that, outside the borders of the Catholic Church, men are in these days to be found whose conscience and spiritual experience simply will not allow them altogether to abandon Jesus Christ and His Teaching, but who are enshackled mentally by a rigid dogma to which they have bound themselves hand and foot. This dogma runs thus: "*Miracles are impossible.*" From which state of mind it follows that the only *modus vivendi* which seems to offer any hope of escape—the only way, that is to say, by which it seems to them to be possible to reconcile their rationalistic shibboleth on the one hand with the claims of our Lord on the other—is to discover a compromise. They will—these thinkers—they aver it loudly, and no doubt with all sincerity—continue to believe in Christianity, but it must be Christianity with a difference. They will believe in Christ—no longer, however, in consequence of His miracles, but rather in their despite.

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[1] Acts ix. 36-42.

[2] Acts ii. 24; iii. 15; iv. 10; v. 30; x. 40; xiii. 30; xvii, 31; xxvi. 6, 23.

[3] Acts i. 22; 1 Cor. ix. 1; xv. 12-19.

Like so many of those compromises which are really nothing but surrenders, this new theory is seen to be more unsatisfactory the more closely it is scrutinised.

A non-miraculous Christ not the Christ of the Gospels.

It is so hopeless, even when judged—on what is supposed to be its strong ground—as an intellectual position. A non-miraculous Christ is certainly not the Christ of the Gospels. As the author of *Ecce Homo* well says: "Miracles play so important a part in Christ's scheme that any theory which would represent them as due either to the imagination of His followers or of a later age destroys the credibility of the documents not partially but wholly."[1] To contemplate the Christ of the Gospels apart from His miracles is as impossible as to regard Demosthenes apart from oratory, or to divorce Herodotus from the writing of history. In such a merely human Christ, the needs of mankind, whether spiritual or intellectual, can find no lasting satisfaction. But a Christ who is other than the Christ of the Gospels is not the Christ who once lived on earth. He is the invention of "The Modern Mind."

The Apocalyptic School.

The most "advanced"—and the most modern—School of German Higher Criticism—the Apocalyptic School, of which Schweitzer is the leading representative—has finally demolished the non-miraculous Moral Teacher—a sort of Liberal Rabbi, whom Liberal Protestantism had substituted for the Christ of the Gospels. Though not themselves accepting the claim of our Lord, these new critics lay stress on the fact that His Ministry largely consisted in the performance of works believed at the time to be of a miraculous nature, and wrought in support of His Mission, as the superhuman Messiah who was to introduce the Apocalyptic Kingdom of God. The work of this school forces us to face the dilemma:

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[1] *Ecce Homo*, p. 51.

Either Christ's Mission was divine, or He was a deluded fanatic. (It is not irreverent, for it is necessary in the interests of Christianity, to state the alternative baldly.) When the problem is reduced to these simple terms, the solution should be easy. Could the victim of a gigantic delusion have played the part in the religious experience of men which in fact has been that of our Lord Jesus Christ?

No philosophical necessity forces us to surrender belief in Miracles.

Moreover, the fact is, I think, becoming every day more and more widely recognised that to cast aside the miracles of Christ and to repudiate the argument derived from those miracles is a retreat uncalled for by sane philosophy. As I have already pointed out, the sole justification for such an abandonment is to be found in the modern dogma which asserts that the uniformity of the laws of nature is of such a character as under no circumstances to admit of the possibility of miracle. But thus to argue—or rather without any argument or attempt at argument to make this assumption—is merely to set up a fetish, and then to call upon all who listen to bow down and worship the tiresome idol. The penalty of refusal is to be branded as men without "culture," "intellectual suicides," and generally persons of no account.

Renan.

Thus Renan has written:

> "The denial of the supernatural has become an indisputable dogma for every *cultivated* mind. The

> history alike of the physical and the moral world appears to us as a development whose causes are internal and altogether exclude the Miraculous, that is the intervention of conscious agents acting with deliberate purpose."[1]

And Mr. J. M. Thompson (unhappily a clergyman of the Church of England) gravely informs us that:

Mr. J. M. Thompson.

"To admit a miracle is to commit intellectual suicide."[2] In which case we can only deplore the fact that many of the greatest intellects the world has ever known have, by their deliberate and confident admission of the Miraculous, committed the crime of self-murder with alarming frequency—and yet have shown remarkable signs of mental vigour, health, and activity after the process. Does Mr. Thompson believe that Cardinal Newman, for example, was dead "intellectually" during the many years that he lived, thought, and wrote after he had, in a well-known section of the *Apologia*, made his signal confession of belief in certain specified miracles? If so, many a man will say, without any intention to be rude to Mr. Thompson: "Let me 'die intellectually' with Newman, even though I am to be termed 'a suicide,' rather than live with his critic in a wilderness of negation."

But (to make an end of quotations, which of course could be multiplied indefinitely) Professor

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[1] *Marc Aurèle*, p. 37.

[2] *Miracles of the New Testament*, p. 6.

Harnack warns us that he is "firmly convinced that what happens in space and time is subject to the laws of matter and motion, and that in this sense, as an interruption of the order of nature, there can be no such thing as miracles."[1]

Harnack.

Of course Professor Harnack's "conviction" is purely *a priori* in its origin. It does not pretend to furnish proof. Stripped of all verbiage it comes back to this: "Miracles do not happen, because I am firmly convinced that they are impossible?"

But *why* should they be held to be impossible?

It is so obvious that "the laws of matter and motion" as well as the law of the uniformity of nature, like all other laws, necessarily involve a lawgiver; moreover, it is undeniable that a human lawgiver always *can*, and for good reason on occasion *should*, derogate from his own laws. And, as Mr. Knox asks with reason: "Why should we suppose that God is bound by His own laws, when the King of England is not bound by his? When we have an uneasy conscience about some piece of judicial severity, we excuse ourselves by saying: 'The Law must take its course.' But is it not ludicrous to suppose that God hides Himself behind His own legislation, and says: 'The Law of the Uniformity of Nature must take its course.'"[2]

The Law of the Uniformity of Nature.

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[1] *What is Christianity?* p. 27.

[2] *Some Loose Stones*, pp. 55, 56.

Besides, it is only by analogy and in a somewhat loose sense that the laws of nature are called *laws* at all. As is manifest, they are not laws in the ordinary sense of the word—that is to say, they are not decrees made by legitimate authority which the subjects of that authority are forbidden to transgress. Such are the injunctions of Natural Law (to transfer the phrase—Law of Nature—to quite another connotation in the moral sphere) imprinted by the Creator upon the hearts of all men, to which all men are required by Him under all circumstances to conform their lives; such again are the enactments of a Civil State, which the citizens of that State are bound to obey (unless they should in any instance come in conflict with a law that belongs to a higher Order); such are (within certain limits) the regulations of the Catholic Church, binding her children to obedience, on such subjects as fasting or abstinence, or the observance of Sunday, or the reception of the Sacraments.

By the Law of the Uniformity of Nature we mean simply that the phenomena of Nature follow a regular sequence. For this reason, as Fr. Joyce has observed, "a Law of Nature is commonly defined as 'a uniform mode of acting which a natural agent observes when under the same circumstances. The universe, as daily experience bears witness, is not a chaos of objects unrelated one to another, but is organised in a series of types. Each individual belonging to any one of these possesses properties similar to those of all other examples of that type. In the same circumstances they all act in the same way. It is scarcely necessary to give instances of a fact so familiar. Water, wherever found, will freeze at 32 deg. F., and given the due atmospheric pressure, will boil at 212 deg. F. Nitric acid, when applied to a normal human skin, will always exercise a cauterising effect. So too in regard to objects imbued with life, whether vegetable or animal. Trees of the same species will always produce fruit of the same sort and wood of similar texture. Caterpillars of the same kind pass into the same butterfly. These uniformities we call 'Laws of Nature.'"[1]

The late Professor Stanley Jevons has argued with reason that the Law of Continuity is a valuable truth, but that it must not be supposed to hold universally. It must, he maintains, be used with great care. The only qualities which we can prove to be uniform to *all* matter are the Laws of Motion and Gravity.[2]

God has no doubt rigidly determined the action of those natural agents, which do not possess free-will, as by a Law. But here two considerations should at once occur to the mind.

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[1] *The Question of Miracles* (in *The Catholic Library*, xiii.), by Fr. Joyce, S.J., pp. 2, 3.

[2] *Cf. The Principles of Science*, by Stanley Jevons, Book V., chap. xxvii.

(*a*) No created cause can operate apart from the concurrence of the Creator. Therefore the principle of Uniformity, since it is in itself in no way "*necessary*," but *contingent* on the will of God, and is concerned solely with secondary causes, always requires God's concurrence as a condition for its application. In the case of a miracle this condition is not verified.[1]

(*b*) The action of natural forces may be checked by the action of some extraneous force proceeding from a being who possesses free-will. Men, there is no doubt, can thus interfere with the course of nature. As Christians believe, unseen beings, whom we call angels—good and bad—have the same power. A *Law of Nature* in the physical order (in this unlike a *Natural Law* which concerns Morals) is far from being something sacrosanct, the free course of which it is a sort of impiety to impede. We are all of us able if it so pleases us, to prevent a ripe apple falling from its tree to the ground by catching it in one hand. Nor will anyone reproach us with "breaking a Law." The greatest and most beneficent of achievements of mechanical skill would have been impossible without much interference with the course of nature. Moreover, from the point of view of physical science, no reason can be alleged why an evil spirit should not be able, for example at a spiritualistic séance, to lift a table from the ground towards the ceiling, or why a good spirit should not, as in the case of the Prophet Habbakuk, carry a man through the air. *Proof* of such events may, or may not, be lacking. To say that they *cannot* happen is to be content with bare assertion. At all events, human creatures—as is obvious—*interfere* with the course of nature every day, acting no doubt within the Order of Nature according to its fixed laws. The Creator alone can *alter*—or, if you prefer, can *act alongside and independently of*—the Order which He has Himself established potentially; when He does so, we have a miracle.

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[1] *Cf. The Question of Miracles*, p. 24.

The late Mr. Hawker, of Morwenstowe, brought together the action of God in Nature and Miracle in poetic words to be found in one of his published letters:

> "I had no greater pleasure than in this season when the anxiety of a whole year is requited by the ripe sheaves and the groaning waggon. . . . Men go out pompously with the seed-drip on their arms and scatter the seed on the soil and cover it with earth, and go their way. Their work is over and their part is done. They can fulfil no more. But God and His angels then enter the field—a mighty power broods over the grain and descends beneath the furrow, and the life below begins to move . . . beneath the silent touch of God. All is miracle [not strictly] and wonder and majesty, and thousands are fed, as they were on Mount Tabor from the few grains that increase and multiply in the Fingers of One who is more than Man."[1]

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[1] *Life and Letters of R. S. Hawker* (Poyle), pp. 111, 112.

A miracle, then, is an event which exhibits direct control over the Laws of Nature, and as such can only be ascribed to the intervention of God.[1] Such an event is by no means a *violation* or even, strictly, a *suspension* of the Laws of Nature. It is a *special divine interposition* by which an effect is produced independently of those Laws.[2]

Meaning of the word Miracle.

Nor can it be legitimately objected that any miraculous intervention involves "a change of Mind in God," since such miraculous intervention was present to the Divine Mind, and determined, from all eternity.

God may intervene miraculously in Nature either moved thereto by His own Wisdom and Goodness, independently of any human supplication; or at the prayer of His Blessed Mother (as at Cana in Galilee); or at that of His Saints in Heaven; or by endowing one of His servants yet living on earth with miraculous gifts. (Thus, St. Paul declared to the Romans, Greeks and Asiatics that in order that the Gentiles should "obey" the Faith, the Holy Ghost had conferred upon him the power to work "signs and wonders and miracles.")[1]

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[1] *Cf.* the definition of St. Thomas (I. Q. 110, a. 4 ad 2) "Miraculum est factum sensibile a Deo præter Ordinem totius naturæ productum."

[2] *Cf.* St. Thomas (I. 1, 105, i. 6) "Sic Deus potest facere præter Ordinem rerum, quia Ordini secundarum caussarum Ipse non est subiectus; sed talis Ordo Ei subiicitur, quasi ab Eo procedens, non per necessitatem naturæ, sed per arbitrium Voluntatis. Potuisset enim et alium Ordinem rerum instituere. Unde et potest præter hunc Ordinem institutum agere, cum voluerit; puta, agendo effectus secundarum caussarum sine ipsis, vel producendo aliquos effectus, ad quos caussæ secundæ non se extendunt."

"In a word," writes Mr. Knox, "God is not governed by His Laws, but He does, normally, govern the world according to Laws."[2]

"We have," writes Fr. Joyce, "when we are considering the course of the world as guided by Divine Providence, to consider a twofold course of events; those which take place in accordance with God's ordinary disposition of things, and those which involve extraordinary intervention."[3]

Induction and the Laws of Nature.

We learn what is God's ordinary disposition of things by scientific observation and by experience. The "Laws" that govern this ordinary disposition—which we speak of as "The Laws of Nature"—we know to be uniform, through the process of arriving at a general conclusion from numerous particular cases which logicians term Induction. No other way is open to any man, unless he is prepared with Professor Huxley to base his belief in the Uniformity of Nature simply on what Huxley terms "an Act of Faith."[4]

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[1] Rom. xv. 18; 2 Cor. xii. 12; Gal. iii. 5; *cf.* 1 Cor. xii. 28.

[2] *Loose Stones*, p. 60.

[3] *The Question of Miracles*, p. 9.

[4] *Cf.* p. 38. Somewhat similarly Mr. Knox calls belief in the Uniformity of Nature a "*presupposition*" (*Loose Stones*, p. 24).

The events which exhibit extraordinary intervention on the part of God—miracles—are known to us also by experience—either by our own experience, or by that of other men, who present us with testimony as to their truth which in numerous cases the simplest amongst us is as fully qualified to test for himself as is the most erudite. In other words, the evidence for the exception to the "Law" is of the same character as that for the "Law" itself. The induction from observed facts that convinces us that *Miracles are possible* is of the same character as the induction that leads us to be certain that the *course of Nature is uniform.*

The existence of Miracles also known through Experience.

Indeed this is to understate the matter. Whilst the fact of the Unformity of Nature depends entirely upon induction (that is upon an inference drawn from *many* instances), certainty as to the possibility of miracles, strictly speaking, needs no induction at all. *One* instance is enough. If I *know* that I have witnessed a miracle for myself, I need no other example. I then *know*, without need of corroboration, that *Miracles are possible.*

Of course miracles are (relatively speaking) very rare. Otherwise they would not be *extraordinary.* Were miracles to be a matter of everyday occur-

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I do not agree with him here, but, if he is right, the argument for the existence of miracles (founded as it is upon *observation*) is proportionately strengthened.

rence, they would hardly fulfil their purpose, which depends upon their being *exceptional.*[1]

But miracles are by no means so rare that the evidence for their occurrence may not, in certain cases (for example in that of some of the Lourdes miracles), be examined by all men who are capable of reading; moreover, in the beginning of Christianity (as is only to be expected), and in the lives of certain of the Saints of all ages they were exceedingly numerous.

Miracles are a peculiarly suitable proof of the Truth of Christianity.

Miracles are in themselves, as the Vatican Council teaches us, a peculiarly suitable proof of the Truth of Revelation.[2]

The fact that Christ Himself appealed to the evidence of His miracles will of course settle this question for anyone who already believes in His Divinity. It is impossible that God should have chosen a means of manifesting His Incarnation which in any way fell short of being perfectly adapted to the end for which

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[1] This consideration may perhaps afford a partial explanation of the fact that the Laws of Nature are so often allowed to take their course, without divine intervention, when their doing so involves some gigantic temporal calamity, as in the case of a terrible earthquake or volcanic eruption. But here of course many other factors (such as God's purposes in the salvation of mankind) are involved, which are in no way relevant to our present subject.

[2] "Miracula . . . quæ, cum Dei Omnipotentiam . . . commonstrent, divinæ Revelationis signa sunt certissima et omnium intelligentiæ accommodata."—*Constitutio Dogmatica de Fide Catholica,* Cap. III. 9.

He chose it. But, altogether apart from our Lord's Authority, there can be no doubt that such miracles as those of which we read in the New Testament, if not absolutely necessary, are at least most *appropriate* as "signs" that Christ was in very truth that which He claimed to be. Christ taught a doctrine concerning man's relations with God, and concerning man's relations with his fellow-men, the sublimity of which is generally recognised. To this doctrine He bore witness by the spotless sanctity of His Life. But He also claimed to be God. This is the most stupendous claim that has ever been seriously made since men first held converse together upon this earth. If He had not worked undeniable miracles in support of this claim, it might have been open for those who listened to Him—nor can we assert that, had He worked no miracles, it would have been unreasonable—to say: "This Man is a good man evidently. He speaks indeed as we have never heard any man speak before Him. But like other good men, like other eloquent men in all ages, whose minds are richly stored with beautiful thoughts, He may be the victim of a sad delusion. Unless God bears witness to Him beyond a doubt, we are driven to hold that in fact thus deluded He actually is, when to our amazement we hear the words fall from His lips: 'Before Abraham was *I am.*'"

Some external proof besides Christ's own Word would seem to have been almost necessary. He Himself said: "I bear witness to Myself, and also the Father who sent Me bears witness to Me."[1] Now, it was especially by the working of miracles that the Father "bore witness" to Christ. It is hard to see what proofs could at the time have been adequate, excepting those which, as the Gospels assure us, were given by God to mankind on behalf of Christ—the fulfilment of the ancient prophecies in His regard, and the working of miracles. Certainly, the miracles of Christ were admirably adapted to inspire the faith which He demanded of those who witnessed them. For no man who believes in God could believe that God would work such miracles, or allow such miracles to be worked, as those which Christ worked, on behalf of a claim that was false, and if false, most blasphemous and highly injurious to the welfare of mankind.

Christ, as we have seen, expressly appealed to God, to bear Him witness by the working of miracles, that so men might be led to believe in His divine Mission.[2] The evidence of miracles would, He knew, be "admirably adapted to the understanding of all men,"[3] since it is a proof before which the most highly educated of mankind must bow their head in adoration of the Omnipotence of God, and also a proof that is clear to the simplest mind—

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[1] John viii. 18.

[2] John xi. 42, etc.

[3] *Conc. Vatic.*, iv. 9.

to those poor to whom Christ tells us that His "Gospel" was in a special manner to be preached. When men, whether learned or illiterate, saw five thousand of their fellows fed with a few loaves, the remnants of the feast filling seven baskets; or when they observed one who had been, to their knowledge, blind from his youth upwards, suddenly, without the application of any medical skill or surgical appliances, seeing as well as they did themselves; or when they beheld Lazarus who had been four days in the tomb, rising from the dead and resuming as before his normal human life—here, and in many other cases just as striking, was evidence ready to their hands, which it required much stubbornness to gainsay. To withstand its effect upon the people Christ was crucified. But after His Death came His Resurrection, which was to make the spread of Christianity possible, and thereby to create that which we know as Christendom.

Wonders worked by evil spirits.

Before we pass to the consideration of the evidence for the reality of the miracles of Christ, perhaps we ought to glance at a specious argument that is sometimes brought against the evidential force of any miracles whatsoever. "You Catholics," it is often objected, "admit that evil spirits can work if not miracles in the strict sense (*i.e.* events that require the intervention of God, independently of the Laws of Nature), at any rate 'marvels,' which interfere with the ordinary course of nature in such a way that it is exceedingly difficult to see how these 'lying wonders' as you call them (your Bible is full of such) can be distinguished from the 'wonders' to which the Apostles made their appeal. How are we able to discern the false miracles from the genuine, so that the false may be duly discredited, leaving the field free for those which are genuine, that they may bear convincing witness to Truth?"

The force of this objection, when we come to examine it, will be found to be apparent rather than real. If indeed it be the case that any "wonder," which at first sight seemed to be miraculous, has been worked by a false Teacher, *after an appeal to God to enable him to work such a wonder in confirmation of his claim to have received a divine Revelation*, it will soon become clear, when we look into the matter, that it was not a true miracle—that it did not emanate from God.[1]

It is certain that No verifiable miracle has ever been adduced as evidence of the truth of any religion save that of Christ. No proofs, which could be tested, have at any time been submitted on behalf of the miracles supposed to have been worked, for instance, by Mohammed—directly we examine them we recognise their futility and falseness—or for those attributed to Gautama, or to Joseph Smith, or to Mrs. Eddy. To compare the legendary wonders connected with the names of such people as these with the miracles of Christ, concerning the truth of which evidence exists in abundance, is to be guilty of a controversial device, which, assuming conversance with the facts (to some of which we shall refer in our next chapter), is unworthy of honourable men.

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[1] Thus St. Thomas writes (*Quodlibet* II. a. 6, ad 4): "*Contingere non potest* quod aliquis falsam doctrinam annuntians vera miracula faciat, quæ nonnisi virtute divina fieri possunt, sic enim esset falsitatis Testis, quod est impossibile."

Christians are convinced that, as no miracles have been worked by God in the past, so no miracles will be worked by God in the future in support of any false religion, or to supersede that which they know to have been the complete and final Revelation given to men through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The challenge thrown out to the adversaries of Christianity early in the fourth century, may be repeated with a force that has gathered strength with the passing of each successive generation of mankind :

"Are you able to point out, among the great men that have ever lived through all the ages, anyone who has done anything one thousandth part equal to what Christ has done ?"[1]

Non-evidential Miracles.

For the rest, with regard to miracles that are not put forward as strictly evidential, but which may either come from God and thus bear witness to His Power, or perhaps proceed from a source which is evil, we have (as the Apostle exhorts us) in each case "to test the spirits."[1]

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[1] Arnobius, *Adv. Gentes*, i. 43.

If a wonder has been worked by a canonized Saint, a Catholic has *a presumption* that it came from the direct intervention of God—though he remembers that it *may* after all be due to some natural cause. A Catholic *knows* that the miracles of the Saints cannot, in any event, be due to the intervention of the Powers of Darkness. But if—to state the contrary case—a marvel be worked by a man who has departed from the Faith, and is preaching "another Gospel, which is not another"[2] (which, being new, is not the Gospel of Christ at all), to such a one we will not listen, though he may have the appearance of an angel of light. For example, I have had no opportunity of examining the "miracles" which are alleged to have been worked by a certain Jansenist Deacon in the eighteenth century, but, since I know that Jansenism, which appealed to these miracles against the Church, is opposed to God's truth, I know also that these "wonders" (if they really took place) cannot have proceeded from the God of Truth. The same judgement we pass without an instant's hesitation upon the "wonders" (so far as they are not conjuring tricks) of the Spiritualists—or upon the cures (so far as they are not merely due to natural causes) of the votaries of "Christian Science."

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[1] 1 John iv. 1.

[2] Gal. i. 6-7.

It is not that, as has sometimes been objected, we here argue in a circle—first testing the claims of him who works the miracle by the miracle itself, and subsequently testing the miracle by the character of him who works it. Rather, our position is this.

(I.) If any doctrine be *to my knowledge* false, I *know* at once that any miracles which may be alleged in its support are either (*a*) inventions, or (*b*) explicable by natural causes, or (*c*) false, that is to say worked by evil spirits. In this last case, as the old Fathers of the Church, and especially the early Apologists, always replied to those who adduced such wonders in derogation of the claims of Christianity, we must bear in mind that Satan is not only the enemy, but also "the ape" or imitator of God. And on examination we shall find that these false miracles bear signs of their origin on their front. Of the possibility of such lying wonders Christ warned His Disciples.[1]

(II.) If, on the other hand, a supernatural claim be made by one who asserts that He has been sent by God to teach Truth, if His sanctity be far beyond what has ever been seen on earth before or since, if His teaching be in accordance with all that I already know to be true, and if, moreover, He works great miracles in support of His demands upon my faith—having asked from God such miracles to prove His divine Mission—then, for me, all question is at an end. Once this proof be given, doubt becomes irrational, for God will not bear witness to a lie.

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[1] Matt. xxiv. 24; Mark xiii. 22.

Such miraculous proof of the truth of their religion has been given to Christians in rich abundance. It is no more invalidated by its counterfeit, than is the value of true coin invalidated by the existence of base metal.

The ground is now clear for us to examine the evidence for the Reality of the Miracles of Christ, as we find them recorded in the Gospels. If they in fact be real, I trust that I have shown that there can hardly be reasonable hesitation as to their evidential value.

CHAPTER VI

THE EVIDENCE OF MIRACLES—THEIR ACTUALITY

Credibility of the Miracles of Christ and of the Evangelists.

THE credibility of the Miracles of Christ depends in the first place upon the credibility of the Evangelists. No one suggests that we possess any means of gaining authentic information, as to the life of Jesus Christ, outside the contents of the canonical Gospels. It was freely acknowledged by the Rationalist writers of the last century that if we can safely trust these four Books as the works of truthful narrators, bearing witness to facts within their own knowledge, no room is left for discussion as to the reality and significance of the miracles which they record. Therefore, Rationalists have made every effort in the past to discredit the testimony of the Evangelists by assigning their work not to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, but to unknown sources, and boldly laid it down that the Synoptics did not see the light until the end of the second century, and the fourth Gospel much later. When this had been assumed, the next step was simple. Nothing could be easier than to build up on this foundation what is known as the "Myth" theory and to assert that the miracles ascribed to Christ were nothing more than legends which had gradually grown up around His Name. But unfortunately for this theory, which, as its advocates are forced to admit, depends entirely upon the hypothesis of the late date of the Gospels, it has been discovered to be itself nothing better than a myth. The insecurity of a building is proportionate to the insecurity of the foundation upon which it rests. The edifice reared with much labour by Strauss and his disciples is based upon a "mythical" support—the myth of baseless incredulity. In other words the argument for the late date of the Gospels is an *a priori* one. Baur admitted this when he wrote as follows: "The main argument for the later date of our Gospels is after all this that they—one by one and still more collectively—exhibit so much of the Life of Jesus in a way which is impossible."[1] The argument for their early date, on the contrary, far from being *a priori*, is *critical and based on evidence.*[2]

The Myth Theory.

Authenticity of the Gospels

After the most exhaustive and critical enquiry possible, the traditional view as to the authorship and early origin of the Gospels remains, at the present day, in triumphant

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[1] *Critical Enquiry as to the Gospels*, 1847, p. 530.

[2] *Cf.* Turton, *The Truth of Christianity*, pp. 305-377.

of St. Mark,
of St. Luke and the Acts,
of St. Matthew,
of St John.

possession of the field. In other words it is now generally admitted that the second Gospel was written by St. Mark under the immediate direction of St. Peter. Nor is it denied that both the third Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles were written by St. Luke. Discussion is now practically restricted to the first and last Gospels. It is true that, as Fr. Joyce writes, "In its present form the Liberal Critics deny the authenticity of St. Matthew's Gospel. They hold, however, that it embodies an earlier work, a collection of the discourses of our Lord written in the Aramaic language, and this they are prepared to acknowledge as in all probability the composition of St. Matthew."[1] With regard to the fourth Gospel, it would be too much to say that Rationalists nowadays admit its Johannine authorship, but it is by no means too much to say that the internal evidence, which proves that it was written by an eyewitness, taken in conjunction with the fact that St. Irenæus expressly ascribes it to St. John, leaves those who still persist in denying that authorship in a position which they find it increasingly difficult to defend. It will be seen at once that, on this subject, the testimony of St. Irenæus, a disciple of St. Polycarp, himself a disciple of St. John, must be of exceptional importance.[1]

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[1] *The Question of Miracles*, p. 78.

Date of the Gospels.

As for the dates of the publication of the Gospels, the agreement has become so close as to deprive the discussion of other than purely academic interest. Catholic writers as a rule place the three first Gospels between A.D. 60 and 70. No Rationalist will now venture to place any of them later than 85, and almost all Rationalists admit that at least two were written considerably earlier. Thus Harnack places St. Mark before 60, St. Luke between 60 and 70, St. Matthew between 70 and 85. It is also generally recognised that the last Gospel was published if not in the first century, at any rate not later than 110 A.D.

Here, then, we have an established fact. These early records of the Life of Christ were written "by eyewitnesses" or at least by persons nearly connected with the events narrated.

Now Strauss is the author of the *Myth theory*, and Strauss has written as follows: "It would indeed most unquestionably be an argument of decisive weight in favour of the credibility of the biblical history, could it indeed be shown that it was written by eyewitnesses or even by persons nearly connected with the events narrated."[2]

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[1] St. Irenæus, *Adv. Hær.*, iii. 1; xi. 16; *cf.* Origen, P. G. xx. 581; Tertullian, *Contr. Marc.* iv. 5; St. Jerome, *Ad Hedib.* Ep. cxx., etc.

[2] Strauss's *Life of Jesus* (English Translation), p. 55.

But there is more to be said on this subject. Not only are we in possession of accounts of miracles worked by Christ written down by contemporaries, but also it is certain that contemporaries appealed to the first-hand knowledge of those miracles possessed by the persons to whom they spoke. For instance, St. Peter thus addressed the Jews:

The Apostles appealed to the knowledge of those whom they addressed.

"Jesus of Nazareth, a Man to whom God bore His witness amongst you by wonders and prodigies and signs, which God worked through Him in your midst, *as you know*."[1] The confident ring of this cannot be surpassed, yet Mr. Thompson permits himself to discredit the testimony of St. Mark (Petrine though his gospel is in source) to the miracles of Christ, by writing these words:

Mr. Thompson and St. Mark

"Many of the stories that Mark sets down he may have heard years before as part of the gossip of his mother's friends."[2]

Mr. Thompson finds other means by which to sneer at the witness of the three other Evangelists. For example, the assertions of St. Matthew as to the vast number of miracles worked by our Lord are "mere bits of literary joinery designed to round off the narrative."[3]

and the other Evangelists.

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[1] Acts ii. 22; *cf.* Rom. xv. 19; 1 Cor. xv. 13-21.

[2] *Miracles of the New Testament*, p. 30.

[3] *Id.*, p. 72.

Would St. Peter, we may well ask, have dared to appeal to the miracles of Christ, had they been merely "stories" which furnished part of the gossip of the friends of Mark's mother, and would those to whom St. Peter preached have listened to him with patience, had they known that those miracles had never taken place, but that their affirmation was a mere bit of "rhetorical joinery"? For after all, it is only reasonable to mete out the same measure to St. Peter in his speeches as to the author of the First Gospel in his writings.

It is amazing that Mr. Thompson (a Fellow of Magdalen and Dean of Divinity) should have any respect for a religion, which, on his theory, gained acceptance through "stories" based upon gossip, and by means of "literary joinery." If possible, it is still more amazing that he does not himself see how gratuitous are his own hypotheses—and how opposed to the facts. If the miracles recorded by the Evangelists were capable of the kind of explanation hazarded by Mr. Thompson, it is inconceivable that (for example) St. Quadratus, a Bishop of Athens at the very beginning of the second century, would have ventured to write as follows to the Emperor Hadrian, and to have made, in support of the Divinity of Christ, this confident appeal to His miracles:

The letter of Quadratus.

"The works of our Saviour were always conspicuous, for they were real. Both they that were healed and they that were raised from the dead were seen by all men (amongst whom they lived), not only when they were healed or raised, but for some time afterwards; not only whilst our Saviour lingered upon the earth, but also after His departure, and for a long time after, *so that some of them have come down to our own day*."[1]

If then some of the men whom our Saviour healed were, as Quadratus asserts, still living when he wrote his Apology, they could have been questioned, and would have said whether the report of their cures was based on fact or merely the outcome of idle gossip.

When we turn away from imaginative hypotheses to dry facts, we discover that in those early days, whilst the witnesses of Christ's miracles were alive, no attempt was made to deny their reality. The evidence was too strong for such a course to be possible. When the enemies of Christianity attempted to deal with the miracles of Christ during the lifetime of those who had witnessed them, they invariably attributed them to magic, as the enemies of Christ had during His own lifetime attributed them to Beelzebub. We may be at least thankful that this is a view which does not find favour at the present day. But the fact that it *was*, in the beginning, the view of those who refused to accept our Lord as their Master, shows how public and certain and notorious the fact of His miracles was at the time, and shortly after the time, when they were worked.

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[1] In Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, iv. 3 (P. G. xx. 307).

View of most modern Liberal Theologians.

What then is the latest theory now prevalent amongst those who do not set down Christ's miracles to magic or to Satan, but yet deny their reality? Well, at the moment of writing it seems to be generally held by "Liberal Theologians" (to give them the title which they affect) that Christ worked cures by some process analogous to "Faith Healing," but that "the Nature miracles," as they are called (the miracles, that is, which are not in accordance with the Uniformity of the Laws of Nature) were due to some misunderstanding on the part of those who narrated them. Fashions change, and "the restatements" of Liberal Theologians change with them. It is not therefore worth while to devote much space to theories which are hardly likely long to outlive the year after next. Yet as such "views" are often advanced it may be worth while to point out shortly both their futility and their extravagance.

It is futile to accept one set of miracles and arbitrarily to reject another when both rest on the evidence of the same witnesses. Men who would be capable of mistake when they asserted that Christ walked on the water as on dry land, are hardly to be trusted when they affirm that He gave sight to

Bartimæus. Moreover, it should be borne in mind that some of the most striking of the *Nature Miracles* are to be found in what is called *the Triple Record*—that is to say where the three first Evangelists coincide. It is, even from the point of view of the "Liberal Theologians," wanton to break in upon this Triple Record, which they themselves admit to be authentic.

As for the allegation that Christ's miracles can be paralleled by the results of modern Faith-healing, or "Christian Science," we may be excused from considering it, until we are confronted with any instances in which a Faith-healer or "Christian Scientist" has instantaneously and completely cured a leper, a withered hand, a woman who has suffered from an issue of blood of twelve years' duration, or a man who was blind from his youth up. Yet these cures are, amongst many others, recorded in St. Mark's Gospel, to have been worked by Christ.[1]

It is quite clear that the miracles of healing stand or fall with the rest. But it is when we come to examine the explanations offered for the "Nature miracles" that not only the futility but also the extravagance of these "explanations" becomes so striking. For example, we are assured that when the Apostles thought that our Lord was walking on the sea, He was really walking on a sunken ridge in the sea. Surely this is the height of extravagance. (There is, we may observe, no attempt to explain what we are told about St. Peter's leaping into the sea, first sinking, and then being sustained by the word of Christ.) It is useless to multiply instances of such evasions indefinitely, but it may be of interest to glance at the works of two living writers. Mr. Thompson may stand for the English and Professor William Benjamin Smith for the American "Liberals." Both in their own country are considered to give us the results of the most modern "up-to-date" scholarship. In quoting them, therefore, we shall not be assailing positions that have, like those of the 18th and 19th century Rationalists, been long since abandoned, as hopeless, by their friends.

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[1] Mark i. 41 ; iii. 1 ; v. 25 ; x. 52.

Mr. Thompson's Views.

We will avail ourselves of Fr. Joyce's summary of Mr. Thompson's views.[1] Its accuracy will not be disputed.

> "It is next the turn of the 'wonders': the calming of the wind and sea, the raising of Jairus' daughter, the feeding of the five thousand, the feeding of the four thousand, etc.
>
> "The storm, it is suggested, doubtless subsided naturally, and the disciples mistakenly attributed the subsidence to something that Jesus had said. Jairus' daughter was not dead. Jesus, who really thought that she was so, by a supreme act of Faith, sought to recall her to life, and she recovered at the appropriate moment. The

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[1] *The Question of Miracles*, pp. 96, 97.

> feeding of the five thousand is more difficult of explanation. Mr. Thompson seems to hesitate as to the adequacy of the old Rationalist 'explanation' that Christ, by His generosity in sharing His bread with the hungry, led others in the company who were themselves amply provided to do the same, that thus all were fed, and so the legend grew that there had been a miracle, for he assures us that 'in all probability' there was 'some event the exact nature of which we cannot now determine,' which the disciples really took for a miracle. This was altered and modified into its present form to serve as a symbol of the Eucharist. The feeding of the four thousand was a pure invention, since it was natural to suppose that if Christ had done this once in Jewish territory, He must have done it also amongst the Gentiles."

From the Christian point of view it would not be one whit more blasphemous, and considerably less irritating to one's common sense, to be told that the Gospel narrative is a pure concoction.

The Views of Professor Smith.

Professor Smith, whose book of 422 large pages, entitled *Ecce Deus*, was first given to the world in Germany, and was subsequently published in Chicago in an English dress, has a view of his own.

But let him speak for himself.

> "Now at last the truth hidden for so many centuries, dimly divined here and there (but never demonstrated) by many superior spirits from time to time both in and out of the Church

—now at last this irrepressible truth shines more and more clearly upon the critical intelligence [through Professor Smith's book], and illumines in streaks the New Testament from Matthew to Revelation. But its broad, diffuse light has yet to be poured over the whole of these Scriptures, especially the Synoptics. In the case of the Fourth Gospel, demonstration is easier. Especially the Miracles, like the Resurrection of Lazarus, the healing of the blind man, the restoration of the cripple at the pool, the feeding of the thousands, the first sign at Cana—all these and others are such obvious symbolisms that it seems well-nigh impossible for any enlightened understanding 'in a cool hour' to hesitate concerning them. Nevertheless, though there can be no question as to the general sense (however much variance as to details), yet the question still presses: 'Where and when did the misunderstanding begin?' It is here that Schmiedel seems, perhaps, to have expressed himself too forcibly. He declares in spread-type, that 'John believed in all his accounts of miracles, that it was real events with which he was dealing; only by way of supplement did they become for him symbols or mere thoughts.' It appears by no means certain—nay, not even probable—that John, being such a one, deluded himself in any such measure. On the contrary, the whole artistic scheme and method of his Gospel seems to be almost the opposite. The Evangelist had inherited a certain body of symbolism, of obviously pictorial doctrine. . . . *These notions he proceeded to work up into elaborate narrative.* [The italics are Professor Smith's.] He sought to make them more vivid and impressive by giving them historic setting and dramatic colour-

> ing. *This it is that constitutes his main contribution to the representation.* [The italics here are mine. One would have thought it so much more satisfactory, if less polite, to write that St. John was a pure romancer.] . . . Consider the resurrection of Lazarus. No one needs to be told that the material event is entirely unhistorical. But whence comes Lazarus? Clearly from the parable in Luke (xvi. 19-31). Here he seems to symbolise the poor pauper world, waiting for the crumbs to fall from the table of the Jew, rich in the Law, the Prophets, the Promises, and the Oracles of God. The parable goes on to say that they who had Moses and the Prophets would not believe though one (Lazarus) should rise from the dead. On this hint the Evangelist speaks. He recognises this signal truth of history, this stiff-necked rejection of the Jesus by the Semites, and he thinks that it deserves to be thrown upon a livid and highly-illumined dramatic canvass. [By the "Jesus" throughout his book Professor Smith understands "the monotheistic idea."] Hence the whole story. Not for an instant does he deceive himself, or intend to deceive others [!!!]. He is simply obeying a certain artistic instinct; he is pressing a metaphor and indeed pressing it rather far."[1]

Contrast all this with the solemn words of St. John himself, "This is that disciple who giveth testimony of these things and hath written these things and we know that his testimony is true."[2]

Professor Smith informs us with much elaboration that at the wedding at Cana—

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[1] *Ecce Deus*, p. 28.

[2] John xix. 24.

> "This Mother of Jesus is none other than the Jewish Church, whilst this great marriage feast at Cana is nothing less than the introduction of the Jesus-cult into the world, the wedding of the Greek and Jewish religions into the new doctrine destined to rejuvenate the earth. Most appropriately it is called 'the beginning of the signs' where we may almost translate σημείων by 'symbols,' . . . in comparison with the wine of 'the new doctrine' the old formalism of the Jews was mere water in the jars 'of stone set there after the Jews' manner of purifying.' At His command the wine gushes forth in abundance, such wine as the guests had never drunk before. What wine do you ask? The same wine contemplated in the Synoptics—the wine of the 'New Doctrine.'"[1]

And so on, and so on, and so on for many paragraphs.

Professor Smith seems very pleased with this explanation of "the Beginning of Miracles," for he writes: "The foregoing exegesis of this passage seems so very obvious that little honour can attach to originality, or even to priority. It may not, however, be amiss to remark that it was worked out fully by the present writer in a paper written some years ago on *Numerical Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel* (not published but circulated privately) and was with him original."[2]

We fear that a sense of humour can hardly be reckoned amongst our Professor's endowments. So cogent does he deem his "illustrations" that he gravely tells us: "It would seem to be almost a gratuitous offence to the intelligence of the reader to pursue such illustrations further."[1] He also writes that in many cases it seems "as clear as the sun" that "the Evangelist invented the investiture, the historic-dramatic garb in which he has clothed the ideas and meanings which he found ready at hand."[2]

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[1] *Ecce Deus*, pp. 121, 122.

[2] *Id.*, pp. 122, 123.

We fully agree with Dr. Smith as to the needlessness of pursuing such illustrations further, We have only pursued them at all because, as recently as 1912—so we learn from the title-page of his book—they were issued to the British public by the *Rationalist Press Association*, and no doubt have by this time been widely spread in our country. We venture, however, to disagree with him as to the cogency of his arguments. To us it is "as clear as the sun" that the overwhelming majority of straightforward people, after they have carefully considered the matter, will say bluntly, "Either these Miracles are false—they never occurred; or, they are true—they happened as they are narrated in the Gospels."

In fairness to the leading English "Liberal Thinkers" it should be stated that they would one and all disown Dr. Smith, who disagrees with them in this—that (of course in the teeth of all evidence) he actually denies "the historicity," *i.e.*, the existence as a real Person, of Jesus Christ. To him our Lord is merely the Personification of Monotheism in the minds of the Apostles, as its symbol. To such extravagant lengths will the spirit of "criticism," when unchecked either by Faith or common sense, sometimes lead even able and learned men. The fact that Dr. Smith would be laughed at at Oxford does not prevent his being regarded as a great authority in America and elsewhere. His book was lent me by a barrister in extensive practice who assured me gravely that it had destroyed his faith in Christianity.

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[1] *Ecce Deus*, p. 28.

[2] *Id.*, p. 27.

Truth of the Miracles of Christ.

We may now sum up the main considerations which place beyond question the truth of the miracles of Christ—

(*a*) They were performed in *public* and were notorious.

(*b*) They were narrated and appealed to by *eyewitnesses.*

(*c*) They were *never denied* at the time when these eyewitnesses were still living.

We should bear in mind, further, with regard to (*a*) *the extent of their publicity*, that they were all worked during the three years of the Public Ministry, and that many of them took place in the presence of large numbers of people, *e.g.*, the multiplication of the loaves—others in the presence of men of position and education, such as Nicodemus, Jairus, the centurion, Zachæus, Scribes, Pharisees, Priests, and members of the Sanhedrin, who certainly cannot justly be considered to have been unduly credulous, or biassed in favour of the claims of Christ; with regard to (*b*) *the fact that the chief witnesses to the reality of these miracles—the Apostles—claimed to be eyewitnesses*, that they also gladly shed their blood in testimony to the truth of the events they attested, and with regard to (*c*) *the fact that they were not denied at the time*, that the enemies of Christ, who were certainly not all of them over-scrupulous, had everything to gain by denial of their reality, had denial been practicable. In view of such facts as these it is not merely difficult, but it becomes a moral impossibility to doubt these miracles, unless we are prepared to turn our back on all the Laws of Evidence.

It is interesting to contemplate the grotesque straits to which the ablest men are reduced when they attempt to explain away the Gospel narrative. They can no longer deny the competence of the witnesses, for the early date of the Gospels has been established; they dare not, and would not, if they dared, attribute the works of Christ to Magic; the Myth theory did not endure long, for it was soon recognised that the Gospels were not mythical and that the faith of the Apostles was not based upon myths. Nothing then remained but to fall back upon such extravagances as those of Mr. Thompson and Professor Smith. The fact is that when men hesitate to believe in the Miracles of Christ, it is *not* that they are satisfied with the "explanations" of "Liberal Thinkers," but that they *are* obsessed by the theory with which we dealt in our last chapter, that "Miracles are impossible." So long as a man persists in holding this presupposition, however strong be the evidence to the opposite with which he is confronted, it is clear that for him conviction is barred by his own volition. On *a priori* grounds, he has ruled out conviction before looking impartially at the state of the case.

If anyone says: "Whatever else I may believe, I will not believe in Miracles," with such a man it is, obviously, impossible to argue at all. He has rendered himself impervious to facts—and this in the name of Reason! But for those who are ready to examine for themselves with open minds, we may point out that, far from its being the case that the miracles of Christ were believed eagerly and at once without any examination, such examination was (at least in one instance, and therefore probably in many others) made on the spot, and made by His enemies.

The cure of the man who had been blind from his birth.

Immediately after the cure of the man who had been blind throughout his life,[1] the neighbours, many of whom had probably known him all his life—certainly for years—closely questioned him as to the way in which he had received sight. They then brought him to the Pharisees who first cross-examined the man himself and did their utmost to induce him to deny the reality of the miracle. When they failed in this endeavour, they summoned his parents and procured their evidence. As it corresponded with that of their son, they recalled him, and tried to catch him in his speech. When all else failed, they could only abuse him. His evidence and that of his parents remained unshaken. He had been born blind, and had been cured instantaneously by Christ.

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[1] John ix. 1-34.

Similarly, the case of the lame man who was cured by St. Peter "at the Gate of the Temple which is called Beautiful,"[1] was investigated by "the Priests and the officers of the Temple and the Sadducees," but they discovered sadly that they "*could say nothing against it*."[2] They could "threaten" and imprison Peter and John. That was within their power. But in the end they could not prevail against the Miracle. The evidence was too strong. "And they said: What shall we do to these men? For indeed a miracle hath been done by them which is known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it . . . and all men glorified what had been done in that which had come to pass, for the man was above forty years old in whom that miraculous cure had been wrought."[3]

We may now give a summary account of the

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[1] Acts iii. 1-9. [2] Acts iv. 14. [3] Acts iv. 16-22.

Gospel Miracles. In the first place it should be observed that in each of the Gospels we are led to believe that the healing of the sick by our Lord was continuous throughout His Public Ministry, so that St. Matthew tells us that "His fame went throughout all Syria,"[1] and that "coming forth He saw a great multitude, and had compassion on them and healed their sick,"[2] and that when the men of Gennesareth had knowledge of Him, they sent into all that country, and brought to Him all that were diseased. And they besought Him that they might touch but the hem of His garment. And as many as touched were made whole."[3] And St. Luke tells us that after the healing of a leper "the fame of Him went abroad the more,"[4] and St. Mark that at Capernaum "all the city was gathered together at the door,"[5] and St. John that the people of Jerusalem exclaimed: "When the Christ cometh, shall He do more miracles than this Man doth?"[6]

Summary account of the Gospel Miracles.

Now, of these miracles the Evangelists have only recorded thirty-four[7] (we are not reckoning those worked after the Resurrection), which as to their character are distributed as follows:

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[1] Matt. iv. 24.

[2] Matt. xiv. 14.

[3] Matt. xiv. 35, 36.

[4] Luke v. 15.

[5] Mark i. 33.

[6] John vii. 31.

[7] Sometimes other incidents in our Lord's Life are deemed to be miraculous, such as the escape from Nazareth (Luke iv. 30).

(*a*) There are seven cases of the *cure of the possessed.*[1]

(*b*) There are seventeen *cures of disease*—those of—(1) a man "full of leprosy,"[2] (2) St. Peter's mother-in-law of a fever,[3] (3) the ruler's son,[4] (4) a bed-ridden man,[5] (5) the centurion's servant,[6] (6) a man with a withered hand,[7] (7) the paralytic of thirty-eight years' standing,[8] (8) a woman with the issue of blood,[9] (9) two blind men,[10] (10) a deaf mute,[11] (11) a blind man at Bethsaida,[12] (12) a man suffering from dropsy,[13] (13) ten lepers,[14] (14) a blind man named Bartimæus,[15] (15), two blind men in presence of a great multitude,[16] (16) a man born blind,[17] (17) the High Priest's servant[18]—a variety of diseases,[19] but in all of which there could be no question as to their diagnosis—all cured instantaneously and completely, not merely without the use of any natural means that could be in any way proportionate to the result, but without the use of any natural means whatsoever.

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[1] Matt. viii. 28-35; ix. 32-33; xii. 22-45; xv. 21-28; xvii. 14-20; Mark i. 23-27; Luke xi. 37-43; Mark i. 40.

[2] Luke v. 12; Mark i. 40.

[3] Matt. viii. 14-15.

[4] John iv. 46-54.

[5] Matt. ix. 1-7; Mark ii. 3; Luke v. 18.

[6] Matt. viii. 5-13; Luke vii. 6.

[7] Matt. xii. 9-13; Mark iii. 1; Luke vi. 6.

[8] John v. 1-15.

[9] Matt. ix. 20-22; Mark v. 25; Luke viii. 43.

[10] Matt. ix. 27-31.

[11] Mark vii. 32-37.

[12] Mark viii. 22-26.

[13] Luke xiv. 2-6.

[14] Luke xvii. 12-19.

[15] Mark x. 46, 52.

[16] Matt. xx. 30-34.

[17] John ix. 1-7.

[18] Luke xxii. 51.

[19] Mark i. 34.

(*c*) There are seven "*Nature Miracles*"—

(1) Christ changed water into wine,[1] (2) stayed the tempest by His word, so that the winds and waves obeyed Him,[2] (3) walked upon the sea,[3] (4) enabled Peter to do the same,[4] (5) obtained for Peter the tribute money miraculously,[5] (6) and (7) on two occasions fed large crowds with a few loaves and fishes.[6]

(*d*) There are three *Raisings from the dead*—those of (1) the son of the widow of Nain,[7] (2) the daughter of Jairus,[8] (3) Lazarus.[9]

Here we have every kind of miracle that can well be imagined. If such miracles stood alone, their evidential force would be irresistible, but they do not stand alone. They are intended to lead up to the crowning Miracles of the Resurrection and Ascension. Those whom Christ raised from the dead, after their resuscitation lived on earth, but eventually died to rise no more until the Last Day. Christ died, but (if the Gospel record be true), He raised His Body from the grave to die no more. For forty days He appeared from time to time to His disciples, and then left this earth, lifting Himself to the very side of God. This has always been held to be the very culminating proof of the truth of Christianity. And of this great fact, if evidence is to be trusted at all, there can be no doubt.

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[1] John ii. 1-11.

[2] Matt. viii. 23-27; Mark iv. 36; Luke viii. 23 26.

[3] Matt. xiv. 25; Mark vi. 48; John vi. 19.

[4] Matt. xiv. 30, 31.

[5] Matt. xvii. 26.

[6] Matt. xiv. 15-21; Mark vi. 31-44; Luke ix. 10-17; John vi. 9-13; Matt. xv. 32-38; Mark viii. 1-9.

[7] Matt. ix. 18-26; Mark v. 22-42; Luke viii. 49-55.

[8] Luke vii. 11-17.

[9] John xi. 1-45.

CHAPTER VII

EVIDENCE DERIVED FROM THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

Alleged discrepancies in the Gospel accounts of the Resurrection of Christ.

THE objection has often been brought against the evidence for the Resurrection of Christ that we find certain discrepancies with regard to the occurrences immediately subsequent to that great Event. Of course it is certain that no single Gospel either gives us, or professes to give us, a full account of all that passed between our Lord and His Disciples during the forty days which intervened between the Resurrection and Ascension. It is equally certain that this full account will be sought in vain in all the Gospels combined. St. John Chrysostom tells us that St. John's Gospel was supplementary to the three first, especially with regard to special favours bestowed upon St. Peter, which in his humility Peter had not allowed St. Mark to record,[1] and St. John himself disclaims the idea that the Gospel narratives were complete, with the magnificent rhetorical hyperbole, that were this to be attempted, the whole world would not contain all the books that would have to be written.[1] In every one of the Gospels gaps in the sacred story are, manifestly, taken for granted.

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[1] *Cf. Hom.* 58 (*al* 59) *in Matthæum.*

The fact, then, that it is difficult, if not impossible, for us with our incomplete knowledge of all that took place, to reconcile *in details* the narrative of the Evangelists, with complete satisfaction to our own minds, at any rate places this beyond dispute—that these four accounts are not four versions of one concocted tale; otherwise who will fail to see that care would have been taken to make these versions agree together minutely and on the surface? Fraudulent conspirators never needlessly add to their difficulties—and to palm off successfully on a sceptical world the false story of a Resurrection from the dead would have had difficulties of its own to which no liar would have added wilfully. Knaves will always make their tale as plausible, and therefore as outwardly consistent, as they know how. Therefore, that the Evangelists wrote without comparing notes proves that they are, in this matter at least, witnesses independent of one another, and so far goes to strengthen the weight of their evidence where they are in perfect agreement—for example with regard to the main issue—that Christ died,

Full agreement of the Evangelists as to the important Facts.

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[1] John xxi. 25.

rose from His Tomb, conversed with His disciples as of old and proved to them, through the testimony of their senses, that He was true Man, possessing the same Human Body, now glorified, which but a few days previously had been nailed to the Cross on Calvary.

The Gospels not the sole evidence for the Resurrection of Christ.

The Apostles the chief witnesses to the Resurrection.

Again, we must remember that no thoughtful man will rest the historical evidence for the Resurrection of Christ *mainly* on the evidence of the Gospels—important though this evidence undoubtedly is in itself—still less will he rest it on the evidence of the Gospels *alone*. The chief historical proof of our Lord's Resurrection is to be found in the fact, which we learn from the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles of St. Paul and other historical sources, that shortly after the death of Christ a large number of those who had known Him intimately during His Life, declared that they were "witnesses" of His Resurrection, that their statements were never disproved or even contradicted, that they gave up everything, suffering cruel torments and finally death itself for their faith that Christ had risen from the dead, that no corrupt motive ever has been assigned, or can possibly be assigned, in explanation of their conviction that Christ had lived upon the earth for forty days after His Crucifixion, and that they convinced other men of this stupendous event to such an extent that, in the end, through this teaching, the Roman world became Christian. Had the Apostles been deceivers, or had they been deluded, never could they have succeeded in imposing either their fraud or their delusion upon mankind with such success as literally to transform the very face of society. Now, this successful preaching of the Resurrection of Christ took place possibly for thirty years or more, certainly for many years, before the first of the Gospels was written. So that it becomes clear that the evidence for the fact of the Resurrection does not depend exclusively upon the Gospels, since that fact had been widely accepted before any Gospel saw the light.

Corroborative evidence of the Gospels.

It is obvious that for us, who live now, the evidence derived from the unchallenged preaching of this fact, that Christ had risen from the dead and conversed with His Disciples, is greatly strengthened, when we learn that four competent authorities—two of them eyewitnesses of what they chronicled, another writing under the immediate supervision of the Chief of the Apostles, and yet another the amanuensis of St. Paul—have left, in writing, accounts of some of the marvellous happenings that surrounded the Resurrection. But the evidence itself was there before a line of the Gospels was penned.

The result of the evidence borne by the first witnesses to the Risen Christ may be seen to-day in

Christianity owes its existence to belief in the Resurrection.

Christianity. Christianity cannot be accounted for in any way to give satisfaction to the mind, unless the Resurrection was a fact. There can be no greater mistake than to imagine that human nature was essentially different in the first age after Christ than it is at the present time. Hard-headed men of the world, cultivated and highly-trained intelligences, for example in Rome, Athens or Corinth, would no more have lightly accepted the report of the Apostles concerning Christ's Resurrection, had that report been capable of disproof, than men of similar calibre would lightly accept a similar report in London or New York to-day. And, as we shall soon see, had the Apostles' statements not been in accordance with what had really happened, nothing could have been easier, under the circumstances, than to disprove them.

Mohammedanism was spread by the sword.

It will always remain the fact that Mohammedanism was established in the main by the sword, whereas Christianity was established by belief that Christ had risen from the dead—a very rock on which to build the Church, if it be true; a support useless as sand—could it once be overthrown.

After these general observations, we may look more closely into the value of the evidence afforded by the belief of the Apostles in the Resurrection of their Lord.

There are five short speeches of St. Peter recorded in the first five Chapters of the Acts, which the most advanced critics admit to belong to the first century. We will give an extract from each of them.

The first recorded speeches and sermons of St. Peter.

(1) Before the day of Pentecost, the Apostles thought well to choose one of the disciples to take the place of the traitor Judas.

"And Peter rising up in the midst of the Brethren said. . . . Of these men who have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus came in and went out amongst us . . . one of these must be made *a witness with us of His Resurrection*."[1]

This was the first great work of the Apostolate "to bear witness" to the Resurrection of Christ.

(2) The first Christian sermon was preached by St. Peter on the Day of Pentecost. This was its gist:

"Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth . . . you have crucified and slain, *whom God hath raised up*. . . . For David said concerning Him. . . . Thou wilt not leave my soul in Hell, nor suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption. . . . He spoke of the Resurrection of Christ. For neither was He left in Hell, neither did His Flesh see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised again, *whereof we all are witnesses*."[2]

(3) After St. Peter had, in the Name of Jesus of

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[1] Acts i. 15-22.

[2] Acts ii. 22-23.

Nazareth, cured the lame man by the Gate Beautiful of the Temple at Jerusalem, he thus spoke to the people, who had beheld the miracle: "The Author of Life you killed, *whom God hath raised from the dead, of which we* [himself and St. John] *are witnesses.*"[1]

(4) "And as they were speaking to the people, the priests . . . came upon them, being vexed that they taught the people and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. . . . Then Peter filled with the Holy Ghost said to them. . . . Be it known to you all and to all the people of Israel, that by the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, *whom God hath raised from the dead* . . . and calling them, they charged them not to speak at all, nor teach in the Name of Jesus. But Peter and John answering, said to them. . . . *We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.* . . . And with great power *did the Apostles give testimony of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord.*"[2]

(5) "And the High Priest asked them, saying: Commanding we commanded you that you should not teach in this name, and behold you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and you have a mind to bring the Blood of this Man upon us. But Peter and the Apostles answering said: We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our

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[1] Acts iii. 15.

[2] Acts iv. 1-33.

fathers hath raised up Jesus, whom you put to death, hanging Him upon a tree. Him hath God exalted with His Right Hand . . . *and we are witnesses of these things*."[1]

St. Peter seems anxious in these, his first five, discourses always to say the same thing—so great was its importance. A little later we shall find him addressing Cornelius, still to the same effect:

"Jesus of Nazareth . . . God *raised up* the third day and gave Him to be made manifest, not to all the people, but *to witnesses* preordained by God, *even to us who did eat and dine with Him after He arose again from the dead*."[2]

Thus we see clearly that the Apostles of Christ—St. Peter was their spokesman—from the beginning put the Resurrection of their Lord in the very forefront of their testimony, and appealed to what they themselves had heard with their own ears and seen with their own eyes—facts concerning which they could not possibly be mistaken.

No dearth of witnesses.

Nor was there any dearth of witnesses. St. Luke writes: "He showed Himself, after His Passion, to the Apostles whom He had chosen, by many proofs, for forty days appearing to them and speaking of the Kingdom of God."[3] But not only to the Apostles.

For example St. Paul who, "as one born out of

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[1] Acts v. 27-32.

[2] Acts x. 38-43.

[3] Acts i. 2, 3.

St. Paul's appeal to the certain fact of the Resurrection of Christ.

due time,"[1] had seen our Lord, not on earth but in a heavenly vision,[2] wrote (as is universally admitted, not more than twenty years after the Death of Christ), to the Corinthians, appealing to Five Apparitions of the Risen Christ, concerning which he evidently thought that no doubt could be raised. With regard to two of them he had, we may be certain, been directly assured by St. Peter with whom he abode for fifteen days shortly after his conversion, and by St. James whom he saw at about the same time.[3]

"He was seen (1) by Cephas, and after that (2) by the Eleven.[4] Then he was seen (3) by more than five hundred brethren at once, of whom many remain unto this present, and some are fallen asleep. After that, He was seen (4) by James. Then (5) by all the Apostles."[5]

And in the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia, St. Paul, as one referring to an indubitable fact, said boldly:

"They laid Him in a sepulchre. But God raised Him up from the dead the third day, who was seen for many days by them who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem who to this present *are His witnesses to the people.*"[1]

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[1] 1 Cor. xv. 9.

[2] Acts ix. 1-8.

[3] Gal. i. 18, 19.

[4] So the Vulgate. The Greek MSS. have *By the Twelve.* We must remember that St. Matthias was with the Eleven at the time (Acts i. 22).

[5] 1 Cor. xv. 5-7.

The statements of the Apostles concerning the Resurrection, either true or false.

One would have thought that statements as categorical as these could meet with but one of two fates. Either they would be accepted frankly as truthful, or they would be rejected as wilfully false. St. Paul evidently thought that there was no other alternative, when he wrote: "If Christ be not risen again, then we are found false witnesses."[2] And so it fell out in the beginning. The Jews said at first that the Apostles were rogues. There was the clumsy attempt to make men believe that they had bribed the guards and stolen our Lord's Body. When this failed, there was nothing left but persecution. The Apostles were scourged and imprisoned and threatened. Their enemies said nothing in refutation of statements which it was hopeless to upset. The historical result of the first struggle between Judaism and Christianity is known to all men. Christianity spread, together with that belief in Christ's Resurrection which guaranteed the truth of its Creed and Mysteries. Until recent times all men have agreed that, if the Apostles were true witnesses, Christ has indeed risen from the dead. Their testimony was accepted, and the fact of Christ's Resurrection was believed throughout Christendom without doubt or

[1] Acts xiii. 29-31.

[2] I Cor. xv. 14, 15.

cavil for more than eighteen hundred years. A long series of Easters, in unbroken succession, year after year, linked the minds of men to the witness borne by the Apostles of Christ to the fundamental proof of the verity of their religion. But when in these last centuries men began to question the truth of our Lord's Resurrection—for they would fain reject the Christianity (which could not be rejected if Christ in truth had risen from the dead)—the challenge came too late to be effective, nor did they any longer venture to assert that the Apostles deliberately deceived. For (so Strauss freely admitted) mere deceivers never have succeeded in imposing their deceptions upon the world, as the Apostles succeeded in imposing Faith in Christ and in His Resurrection; above all, mere deceivers do not give up all things and gladly shed their blood on behalf of a fraud, as the Apostles gladly died for Christ. It was, therefore, necessary to find some other theory, that might be a halfway house between the theory of deception and the belief that Christ had risen. Two such theories have in fact been imagined. We may call them the *Swoon* Theory and the *Hallucination* Theory.

The Swoon Theory.

The *Swoon* Theory need not detain us long, for it has gone the way of the *Deception* Theory, and is now advanced by hardly anyone. Suffice it to say that it is

(*a*) *Historically false.* Renan reminds us that the

Jews never would have been satisfied without certainty as to the actual death of Christ:

> "The best guarantee which the historian possesses on a point of this nature [the death of Christ] is the suspicious hatred of the enemies of Jesus. We cannot believe that those who were interested did not take some precaution in this regard."[1]

And we know that in fact every care *was* taken by Pilate to see that Christ was dead before His Body was handed over to Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus.

(*b*) Above all, *Morally incredible.* For it involves as a consequence that Christ Himself, after having succeeded in making His Disciples believe that He had risen from the dead, and having ascended into Heaven before their eyes, retired into an unknown spot where He allowed those who believed in Him to suffer cruel torments for their faith, whilst He Himself remained in tranquillity. We know that this is *morally impossible.* The Christ of whom we read in the Gospels would never have acted thus. This is certain, if anything in the world is certain. But it is not only morally, but also

(*c*) *Physically impossible.* For how could Christ, even if He had survived crucifixion and the soldier's spear, have recovered in the Tomb from His supposed Swoon, freed Himself from His Grave-clothes, rolled back the heavy stone and escaped? And if

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[1] *Cf. Vie de Jésus*, chap. xxvi.

He had thus escaped the soldiers at the time, how could He afterwards have lived? Jesus of Nazareth was far too well known to have succeeded in completely disappearing from men's sight in the little country of Palestine. If He did not die on the Cross, and was but human, He must have died somewhere, and it must have been known. Yet no man has ever suggested any place for the death of Jesus Christ excepting Mount Calvary, or any other place for His Sepulchre save the Tomb of Joseph.

(*d*) *Inconsistent with the subsequent facts, especially with the behaviour of the Apostles.* This is admitted by Strauss, who writes as follows:

> "It is impossible that a Being who had stolen half-dead out of the Sepulchre, who crept about weak and ill, wanting medical treatment . . . could have given to the Disciples the impression that He was a Conqueror over death and the grave, the King of Life—an impression which lay at the bottom of their future resuscitation—thus He could but have weakened the impression which He had made upon them in life and in death; at the most could only have given it an elegiac voice, but could by no possibility have changed their sorrow into enthusiasm and have elevated their reverence into worship."[1]

The Hallucination Theory.

All this is so clear that the Swoon Theory has followed the *Deception* Theory into complete disrepute, and those who deny the reality of the Bodily Resurrection of Christ now fall back upon the *Hallucination* Theory. This, under one form or another, is advocated at the present by all " Liberal Thinkers."

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[1] *New Life*, i., p. 412.

We are reminded that people who wish to see a ghost may easily persuade themselves, without any foundation in fact, that they actually have seen one. And this under certain circumstances is undeniable. That is to say, hallucination under certain circumstances certainly takes place. But hallucination either passes away, or continues. If it continues it is madness. A man who expects to see a dead friend may sometimes, without reason, fancy that he sees him for a few moments. This is hallucination. But if, without reason, he fancied that this friend talked to him, ate with him, forgave him his offences, gave him power in his turn to forgive the sins of other men, thrice commissioned him to take care of those whom he was leaving on earth (under the figure of feeding his sheep and lambs)—this would not be hallucination, it would prove a state of diseased imagination, barely if at all, distinguishable from madness. St. Peter believed that all these communications passed between himself and Christ after the death of Christ. It will hardly be maintained that Peter was mad, but if he was mad, this madness of his was shared by all the other witnesses to the Resurrection, who all believed that they had similar relations with our Lord, and—these madmen succeeded in establishing Christianity. Men who deny the Resurrection of Christ content themselves too often with discoursing about the possibility of hallucination *in general,* without for a moment facing the fact that *in the particular case* of the evidence for the Resurrection hallucination is impossible because *of the character of the witnesses*, because *the evidence is too detailed,* and because *there are too many of them* for hallucination to have been possible for all.

One man, or perhaps two or three, may conceivably be subject to such hallucinations as must according to "modern thinkers" have possessed Peter and James and John and the other Apostles, but hardly the five hundred to whom St. Paul appealed, many of whom were living at the time. The theory of "collective hallucination" to which German Professors used to treat us on this subject, alleging that men see what they want to see or expect to see, is delightfully discredited—at least in Belgium—where these same Professors are found assuring the world that Belgium deluded herself "collectively" into "seeing" German atrocities.

Excitable and credulous women of a certain temperament may sometimes allow their imagination to lead them very far astray from accuracy of statement, but only a madwoman or an impostor could have narrated the conversation between Mary Magdalene and Him whom she thought to be a gardener, unless it really took place. There are, no doubt, foolish men to be found who will fancy anything, but such a man was not Thomas the Apostle in the presence of his risen Lord. Paul no doubt, as "one born out of due time,"[1] saw a vision of One who was no longer on earth but now in heaven—still, though the evidence of this vision was enough for himself, when dealing with others he appealed not only to that which he had himself seen when he was stricken on the road to Damascus, but also to the evidence of Peter and James, to each of whom had been granted a separate appearance of our Lord.[2]

It has been suggested to me that in the summer of 1914 a large number of people in England were convinced that they had seen, or had seen persons who had seen, Russian soldiers passing through the country. Yet we know now that this was a delusion. But, whatever may be the explanation of this strange mistake, no one so far as I am aware (not even the *Daily News* correspondent in Belgium, who wrote that he had actually seen these Russians and therefore knew that they had come) ever asserted that he had *talked* to them and that *they had said that they were Russians from Archangel.* After all, the people who thought mistakenly that they had seen *Russians* were not mistaken in the fact that they had seen *men.* No one will assert that the ordinary Englishman is as well acquainted with the appearance of Russians, as Peter and John and Thomas and the Holy Women and the other witnesses were as to the appearance and voice and (if I may dare to use the expression) ways of our Lord Jesus Christ. Mistake in the one instance, though strange, is not incredible. It is simply incredible that the Apostles should have been mistaken as to their Lord. Englishmen on the look-out for Russians (and after the first rumours spread many Englishmen were on the look-out) might easily take other soldiers, "wrapped up in great coats," for Russian soldiers, who were not Russians at all. But the two Disciples, for example, on the way to Emmaus were so far from being on the look-out for Christ that they did not recognise Him until He unexpectedly revealed Himself to them in the Breaking of Bread. If Englishmen, however, had stated not merely that they had seen Russians, but that they had held elaborate conversations with them, establishing their identity, in any way similar to those conversations which are recorded in the Gospels, as having established the identity of the Risen Christ with Him who had been crucified, we should be driven to say that the English witnesses to the Russians were not hallucinated but that they were either madmen or liars. Now, this is exactly what "modern thinkers" (most rightly and reasonably) shrink from saying about the Apostles and other witnesses to the Resurrection. So they are driven to parallels which on examination are found not to be parallels at all, and to generalisations concerning "subjective visions" and the like which break down the moment we attempt to apply them to the specific case of the evidence for the bodily Resurrection of Christ.

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[1] 1 Cor. xv. 8.

[2] 1 Cor. xv. 5-7.

The Empty Tomb.

I have left almost to the last any consideration of the great outstanding fact which, even if it stood alone, would deal the death-blow to the hallucination theory. *The Tomb where Christ's Body had been laid was empty.* It would have been useless to provide witnesses to the Resurrection, if the Body of Christ could have been produced. *But the Tomb was empty.* When for example Peter said to the Jews: "The Author of Life you killed, whom God hath raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses,"[1] does anyone imagine that his hearers would have tolerated such cutting words could they have shown that they were false by the simple expedient of proving that Christ was dead by asking all who willed to see His Body in the Tomb? Had they done so, they would have attained their end at once, and the whole fabric of Christianity would have fallen down like a pack of cards, which a child may without an effort throw to the ground. That the Body of Jesus was never found by His enemies will always be the irrefutable proof of the truth of the statements of His Apostles, and of His glorious Resurrection from the dead.

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[1] Acts iii. 15.

Mr. Streeter's Theory.

Quite recently a modification of the hallucination theory has been put forward by Mr. Streeter and other "modern thinkers." According to this theory the Apostles did see *something*. As to what exactly they saw there is disagreement, but whatever they saw, they did *not* see the Body of Christ which had been placed in the Tomb on the Good Friday night. Still—it is argued—they were *not* subject to hallucination as to the fact. Mr. Streeter, for instance, who admits that he can find no satisfactory explanation of the Empty Tomb, but considers himself driven by *a priori* arguments at all costs to deny the bodily Resurrection of Christ, assures us that the appearances were directly caused by the *Spirit* of the Risen Christ, and that the Apostles were subject to hallucination as to the conclusions that they drew from what they saw.

But this theory

(*a*) would make God responsible for the Apostles' mistake, since God is supposed to have caused the apparitions, and Christ spoke words that directly led the Apostles into error. It therefore seems (to use the mildest term possible) to be irreverent—

(*b*) and quite needlessly irreverent, since it is only recommended by an *a priori* assumption (*apart from all evidence*) that a bodily resurrection, such as the Apostles believed that they had witnessed, is impossible.

(*c*) It is also *against* the evidence, which assures us that Christ took pains to show that it was His true Body which the Apostles saw.

(*d*) Moreover, it is confuted by the fact of the Empty Tomb. Once again we ask, if God did not (as Christians believe) raise the Body of Christ from the Sepulchre, where was it when, after the stone had been rolled back (by whatever agency you please), that Sepulchre was seen to be empty?

No, the more we consider the matter in all its bearings, the more we recognise the fact that there is no tenable third supposition. Either the Apostles were false witnesses and had in some extraordinary manner stolen the Body of Christ and concealed all traces of their crime—either they wilfully deceived the people—or their witness is true and Christ really rose, in His Body, from the Tomb.

Before we leave the subject of the Resurrection, we should like to observe that if the Apostles had suffered from hallucination with regard to supposed visions of the Body of Christ, they most certainly would not have all ceased to be hallucinated in this particular manner at precisely the same time—at the end, that is, of the Forty Days, when, exactly at the same moment, they all believed that, whilst they looked on, they beheld Jesus going up to Heaven.[1] Experience shows that when once a diseased imagination begins to run riot in hallucinations, it is lavish with these supposed experiences, nor are they easily held in abeyance, much less altogether suspended. The case of those persons whose minds suffer from such delusions is known to be pathologically incurable. Anyone who suffers in this manner will so suffer to the end of his days. Yet from the particular moment of the Ascension not one of the Disciples of Christ imagined that he saw Christ upon the earth—from this particular moment not one of the holy women fancied that there was granted to her a vision of her Lord. The supposed hallucinations stopped abruptly. After a given date no man ever even imagined that he had seen, conversed with, eaten with our Lord, who was risen from the dead, but was still a denizen upon this earth. Surely, this fact by itself ought to suffice to dispose of the hallucination theory.[1]

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[1] Acts i. 9.

Mr. Knox writes as follows :

The Ascension.

> "Of course the Resurrection involves a corollary, and I think it is largely the corollary the modern critics boggle at. It involves the Ascension. 'Christ did truly rise again from death, and took again His Body with flesh, bones, and all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature; wherewith He ascended into Heaven.' Mr. Streeter says he knows of no living theologian who

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[1] If anyone persists in making Almighty God responsible for the hallucination, this consideration will not affect his position, since I imagine that he would hold that God caused the hallucinations to cease after the Ascension—that is, after they had achieved their purpose of leading the Apostles to grasp the fact of the persistence of the life of the *soul* after death.

> would maintain a physical Ascension in this crude form. [When one reads this, one can only wonder what Mr. Streeter means by "a theologian," and who are the "theologians" whom he has chanced to meet.] I have no claim to be a theologian, I can only say that as a person of ordinary education I believe, as I hope for salvation, in this literal doctrine."[1]

Mr. Knox is known to be not only "a person of ordinary education," but a brilliant scholar. However, mere scholarship, when we are dealing with such matters as those which now occupy us, is neither here nor there. What is of importance is that, as Mr. Knox may remember to his comfort, within the world-wide communion that finds its centre of Unity in the See of Rome, there is no one living, be he theologian, or scholar, or person of ordinary education, or simple peasant, who will not echo his words to-day, or hesitate for one moment to make them his own. As we "hope for salvation," we Catholics all believe not only in the literal Resurrection, but also in the literal Ascension of Jesus Christ our Lord, exactly as we read the account in the Holy Scriptures. This fact, for it is a fact, should surely be faced by modern thinkers; it might perhaps make them more modest and even perhaps more hesitating in their multiplied denials. The testimony of the Faith of the Catholic Church cannot be altogether ignored with safety. It is surely a factor that should have some weight in the final summing-up.

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[1] *Some Loose Stones*, pp. 84, 85.

Mr. Knox no doubt is correct in thinking that the Ascension, as the corollary of the Resurrection—by which indeed it is involved—is an additional difficulty to "modern critics." Yet the reason for this can only be that once again on purely *a priori* grounds they hold it to be "impossible." The fact that modern science has undoubtedly modified our views concerning the local motion involved in the Ascension does not affect the central Truth that the Body of Christ did actually leave the earth the fortieth day after His Resurrection.

When we have come to understand that God is the author of "the laws of Nature," and can act independently of these laws, the Scriptural statements concerning the Ascension are actually a corroboration of those concerning the Resurrection. Indeed St. John, far from thinking that the Ascension was in his time a difficulty, tells us that our Lord appealed to what He knew would be one day the certain fact, which the Apostles would have witnessed, of His Ascension, in support of His mysterious teaching concerning the Real Presence.

"He said to them: Does this scandalize you? If then you shall see the Son of Man ascend where He was before?"[1]

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[1] John vi. 62, 63.

The statements of Scripture as to this wondrous fact are so clear as to leave no room for hallucination, yet so simple and so obviously sincere as to leave no room for the only other hypothesis open to the unbeliever—that of invention.

Take the summary at the end of St. Luke's Gospel. He tells us that (1) Christ suddenly "stood in the midst" of the Disciples, as they were discoursing about His appearance to Simon Peter, and telling how He had been "known in the Breaking of Bread,"[1] (2) and assured them that He was not "a spirit, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as you see Me to have,"[2] (3) that He "ate before them,"[3] (4) that He "opened their understanding" that they might understand the Scriptures—the prophecies—concerning His Passion and Resurrection,[4] (5) that He told them that they were to be "the witnesses of these things,"[5] (6) that He declared that He would "send the promise of His Father upon them,"[6] that He then "led them out as far as Bethania and lifting up His Hands He blessed them; and it came to pass that whilst He blessed them, He departed from them and was carried up to Heaven. And they departing went back to Jerusalem with great joy."[7]

It all must stand or fall together. Hallucinated the Disciples certainly were not—wilful deceivers no one now ventures to call them. It follows that they spoke the truth, as those who first heard their testimony so largely recognised.

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[1] Luke xxiv. 34, 35, 36.
[2] *Ib.*, 39, 40.
[3] *Ib.*, 42.
[4] *Ib.*, 44, 46.
[5] *Ib.*, 48.
[6] *Ib.*, 49.
[7] *Ib.*, 50-52.

Christ has risen from the dead, in His Human Body, and ascended into Heaven, even as the Church has always believed, even as the Apostles taught in the beginning, accordingly as they had seen with their eyes, and heard with their ears and felt with their hands. He has risen and ascended in the same Body as that in which He suffered on the Cross—the same Body as that which was buried in the Tomb. He rose from the dead to be the first-fruits of them that sleep in Him. He ascended on high to plead for us sinners with God His Father. He was crucified, He died, He was buried, He rose again, He ascended into Heaven. These are facts all borne witness to by overwhelming human evidence as well as by our Faith.

And this is the Christian Creed. If the Resurrection of Christ be a fact, no one can honestly doubt that the Christian Creed is true.

CHAPTER VIII

THE EVIDENCE FROM MODERN MIRACLES

Colonel Turton and Modern Miracles.

"Why are there no miracles *now*, when they might be properly tested? If they were really employed by God as helps to the spread of His Religion, why should they not have accompanied it all along, as it is said they did the Jewish religion?"[1] It seems to me that Colonel Turton displays much less than his usual acumen in answering this question which he proposes as an obvious objection to the reality of the Miraculous. He dismisses the question of *non-evidential* miracles, "such as those which are said to have occurred at various periods of Church History, and which were, as a rule, for the benefit of persons already Christians," with the remark that "they need not be considered here," although he proceeds to admit that "if true, they would of course tend to prove the New Testament ones."

Strangely enough the subject does not seem to be of much interest to Colonel Turton, and his phras "which are *said* to have occurred" shows that h has never examined the matter carefully. *Evidential* miracles he believes to have ceased with the days of the Apostles and argues that "as there is to be no fresh Revelation—the Christian Revelation, in this unlike the Jewish, was made once for all by Christ and His Apostles[1]—there can be no fresh miracles to attest it." But one is irresistibly forced to ask *why not?* Surely the Christian religion preached to-day for the first time by the banks, say, of the Zambesi, is as new there as it was new when first preached in Jerusalem by Peter or Paul.

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[1] *The Truth of Christianity*, ch. xvii., p. 442.

No doubt an instructed Christian does not need fresh miracles in *evidence* of the Faith. As we have already pointed out, the practice of their religion is its own evidence for all who use it, and if a Christian be a man of education, and desire external testimony for his faith, he can consider the evidence adduced from the miracles recorded in Holy Scripture. But even the instructed Christian can be *strengthened* in his faith, whilst the untutored savage has no Christian experience behind him, and is certainly unable in any way to test the Gospel narrative. It would seem, then, that miracles—evidential miracles—if God see fit to grant them, are a highly appropriate means on the Zambesi now, just as they were of old in Jerusalem, in order that the stranger may be more easily brought to believe in Christ.

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[1] Of course Catholics would express this differently. We should say that "the Christian Revelation was given once for all by God to His Apostles." It was not "made by the Apostles."

Now a Catholic will answer the objection brought forward by Colonel Turton—*why are there no miracles now?*—in exactly the opposite manner from that employed by Colonel Turton himself. A Catholic will frankly deny the assumption underlying Colonel Turton's argument—the assumption that miracles have ceased.

> "We affirm," writes Cardinal Newman, "that the Supreme Being has worked miracles on earth ever since the time of the Apostles; Protestants deny it. Why do we affirm, why do they deny? We affirm it as a first principle, they deny it as a first principle; on either side the first principle is made to be decisive of the question. . . . Both they and we start with the miracles of the Apostles, and then their first principle or presumption against our miracles is this: 'What God did once He is *not* likely to do again.' While our first principle or presumption for our miracles is this: What God did once He *is* likely to do again. They say: 'It cannot be supposed He will work *many* miracles;' we: 'It cannot be supposed that He will work *few*.'"[1]

Miracles have not ceased.

Catholics believe that miracles have not ceased and never will cease—that they are worked every year and very much oftener, that often they may be, and have been (as at Lourdes) "properly tested," and that most certainly if they (as we are told in the Bible)

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[1] *Present Position of Catholics*, ch. vii., p. 301.

"accompanied the Jewish religion all along," it is antecedently highly probable that they would have similarly all along accompanied the Christian religion, since the dispensation of the New Testament is far more "glorious" than that of the Old.[1] This antecedent probability becomes a certainty when we examine the prophecies of our Lord as to the future of His Church—so that "the important objection," as Colonel Turton (not unnaturally from his point of view) terms it, ceases to be an objection at all, and is, when the facts are known, converted into a new and most powerful argument for the Faith.

We will first glance at the words of Christ:

The Promise of Christ.

"And these signs shall follow them that believe: In My Name they shall cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues. They shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay their hands upon the sick and they shall recover."[2]

There is certainly no suggestion or hint here which would lead us to suppose that these miraculous powers were to cease with the lives of the Apostles. "These signs" (that is to say these miracles) are "to follow them that believe"—presumably in every age. They are to be one of the endowments of that Church which in every succeeding age is still Apostolic, still the Temple of the Holy Ghost, still, the abiding-place on earth of Christ Himself—to be exhibited not indeed by each one of the Faithful, but according to the gift and disposition of God, on behalf of the whole Body, by certain chosen souls :

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[1] 2 Cor. iii. 7, 8.

[2] Mark xvi. 17, 18.

Words of St. Paul.

"And the manifestation of the spirit is given unto every man unto profit. To one indeed by the Spirit is given the word of wisdom . . . to another the grace of healing in one Spirit, *to another the working of miracles*, to another prophecy, to another the discerning of spirits; to another divers gifts of tongues . . . but all these things one and the same Spirit worketh, dividing to everyone according as He will."[1]

And of our Lord.

And our Lord even declared that "greater works" (miracles) should be worked in His Church in His Name than He had Himself deigned to work when He was on this earth.[2]

Their fulfilment.

This was the forecast, and if we care to look we may find the fulfilment. To quote the words of Cardinal Newman: "The Catholic Church from East to West, from North to South, is hung with miracles"[3]—and indeed, were this not so, the Catholic Church could hardly claim to be identical with the Church of the New Testament, which was miraculous from beginning to end.

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[1] 1 Cor. xii. 4-11.

[2] John xiv. 12.

[3] *Present Position of Catholics*, ch. vii., p. 299.

Strictly evidential Miracles abounded especially in the first years of the Christian Church.

We may, no doubt, freely grant that evidential miracles were worked with very much greater frequency in the first few years after the Day of Pentecost than in subsequent times, for in those first years, when the gigantic task of building up the House of God on the foundation stones of a handful of poor men was only commencing, such miracles were most necessary.

And have ceased in Christian lands.

We may further grant that miracles which are strictly evidential—that is to say, whose *primary* purpose is to bear witness to the truth of Christianity—are not likely to be worked at any period in countries which are already Christian, for such countries have already evidences in abundance, and it is "an evil and adulterous generation that seeketh a sign,"[1] when conscience and reason witness together to the duty of belief.

All Miracles not evidential in their primary purpose.

All miracles, however, are not strictly evidential to the Faith. The primary purpose of many miracles is to witness in an extraordinary manner to the goodness and mercy of God, and to confer extraordinary benefits upon God's creatures. Yet, even such miracles as these become secondarily evidential, for when worked by the Saints on earth they bear witness to the truth of the religion which those

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[1] Matt. xii. 39; xvi. 4.

Saints professed; when worked in answer to prayer addressed to those Saints in Heaven, or to the Blessed Mother of our Lord, they are an evidence that such prayers are heard, and are pleasing to the Creator—in other words that the Catholic Doctrine concerning the Invocation of the Saints is true.

Urging this point of view, Fr. Joyce writes with reason:

> "Whatever view be taken on miracles in Church History, there can be little doubt that they have been a potent force, both in converting the heathen, and in confirming the faith of believers. This is sufficiently exemplified by the case of Lourdes. During the last half-century each year has seen the spot visited by many thousands of pilgrims. These have themselves witnessed or at least have heard from others of the marvellous occurrences at the grotto. They have gone home with their faith in God and in His Presence in the Church rendered proof against all the fallacies of unbelief, and their influence in turn has been felt by many others who have never visited the place in person. Throughout this period these pilgrimages have been to the Catholic Church a veritable bulwark against that tendency to rationalism and to the rejection of the supernatural which has done so much to sap the foundations of religion in every non-Catholic body."[1]

There has been no period in the Church's history when Catholics have not known that miracles were being worked by God round about them—miracles to which they have always pointed as showing that God was in their midst. It was so in the days immediately after the Apostles; it was so in patristic times; it was so in the Ages of Faith; it is so at the present time. A contemporary letter from the Church of Smyrna tells us of the miracles which marked the martyrdom of Polycarp, the disciple of St. John. This letter gives us the testimony of eyewitnesses and speaks of the astonishment of the pagan onlookers. The Fathers one after the other from Irenæus, Justin Martyr and Tertullian in the second century to Bernard in the twelfth, through a long succession of illustrious names, give their testimony to the frequency of miracles, many of which they had themselves observed. Nor can this be set aside as the evidence of fanatics and credulous fools. Such were not Origen and Cyprian, Jerome and Augustine, Ambrose and the Venerable Bede. When we pass from the time of the Fathers to that of the Schoolmen, we know that the ignorant have characterised the period in which those great Schoolmen flourished—one of the most enlightened intellectually the world has known—as "Dark Ages," principally because in those days men believed so confidently in the constant exhibition of the miraculous Power of God, to which their senses bore them witness. For example, the evidence for

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[1] *The Question of Miracles,* pp. 105, 106.

Miracles in the patristic age,

and in the Ages of Faith,

the *Stigmata* of St. Francis of Assisi is generally recognised by all those who have investigated it to be overwhelming. And Catholics know that God's Hand is not shortened in these latter days. At the very close of the eighteenth century—the time of Voltairism and "the Age of Reason"—Gerard Maiella, an unlettered lay-brother, worked miracles as numerous and as astounding as any ascribed to Antony of Padua in the thirteenth.[1] And St. Antony and St. Gerard and other Saints in Heaven work miracles to-day on behalf of those who seek their intercession as marvellous as any they ever worked whilst still on earth. God never ceased to work miracles at St. Winifred's Well even when the Faithful in England and Wales were but a handful. In this century hardly a year has passed without wonders being worked at the shrine of Holywell, which it is impossible to explain in uniformity with "the Laws of Nature." Above all is it the case that at no period of the Church's history have wonders more wonderful been worked by the Blessed Mother of God than those which in her goodness she works to-day before the eyes of living men. The miracles granted to our generation at Pompeii and Lourdes and many another hallowed spot, are at least as numerous and marvellous—and

and in modern times.

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[1] No one who reads the most interesting *Acta Beatificationis* of St. Gerard will call this statement in question. The evidence for his miracles is simply overwhelming.

of course far more verifiable—than those worked by our Lady for our fathers at Glastonbury and Walsingham of old.

Various kinds of miracles worked by the Saints.

When we read the lives of the Saints, we find that our Lord has indeed been true to His Promises. There is no "work," which He worked on earth, that has not been worked by one or other—often by many—of His servants, and (as He predicted) His servants have even worked miracles, which their divine Master is not recorded to have worked Himself.

The Saints, in all the ages, have cast out evil spirits from the bodies of their victims. To this fact the early Apologists in the first centuries bear witness, and though in Christian lands Satan has been "cast out and bound" and therefore Possession is comparatively rare, the exorcisms of the Church still have their effect in the exceptional cases where they need to be employed. Peter and Paul and Dominic and Philip Neri and other Saints, in their Lord's Name and by His Power, have raised the dead to life, as did His Prophets before He came. St. Dominic, St. John Joseph of the Cross, St. Clement Hofbauer, St. Gerard Maiella are amongst the many Saints who have miraculously multiplied food; the seraphic St. Francis received on his body the impression of his Saviour's Wounds; St. Paul and St. Benedict drank poison and it harmed them not. Since the Ascension of our Lord to the present time His Saints have continually cured the sick. They have read the secret thoughts of men, and appeared in different places at the same time, and prophesied the future. Since the fourth century—so they will tell you at Naples—since the fourteenth century beyond doubt (for since that time the official records have been preserved), the blood of St. Januarius liquefies on his Feast. It liquified last year and no doubt will do so this.

Nothing can be easier than to dismiss these things, and such as these, with a wave of the hand—with an ignorant sneer or scoff. But nothing is harder, nothing less possible, than to disprove the mass of evidence upon which they rest. Now do not let me be misunderstood. Since Catholics are not entirely bereft of common sense, of course they are fully aware that there are numberless cases of mistake, where events are attributed to miracle which are really due to natural causes. Very probably there may have been cases of actual fraud, though had there been such available in the 16th century, the enemies of the Miraculous in England would have produced them, instead of, as in the case of the Rood of Boxley, pretending that people were deceived, who as a matter of fact were just as well aware that they were witnessing the result of

Many supposed miracles due to natural causes.

Fraud and the Rood of Boxley.

mechanism, as are we when we observe anything of the same sort at the present day.[1]

All Miracles are not supported by the same strength of Testimony.

Moreover, all miracles do not rest on the same evidence. For some the evidence is overwhelming, for others less in various descending degrees of probability.

It ought to be far more widely known than it is that, although no Catholic may lawfully doubt the *possibility* at any period of the Church's history of the Miraculous *in general*, no Catholic may lawfully claim *divine* Faith for the miraculous nature of any *particular* fact, outside of those which are narrated in the Holy Scriptures. For this reason Pope Urban VIII. has expressly commanded that any Catholic writer, who may allege supposed miracles in the lives of holy persons, should preface his book with the declaration that he only gives to these events *human* faith. That is to say every miracle depends for its acceptance upon the human evidence that may be brought forward in its support. It stands or falls by its own proofs. It may be tested by the same tests that are applied to any other event in the secular history of men. One position alone is ruled out—the *a priori* assumption that every miracle is impossible, notwithstanding any evidence (however overwhelmingly strong), that may be offered as to its miraculous character. Such an assumption (which of course peremptorily closes all discussion on the subject) I have already shown to be in itself devoid of all evidence and to be purely arbitrary.

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[1] *Cf.* Fr. Bridgett, *Blunders and Forgeries*, pp. 159-208.

Evidence for modern miracles is often rigorously tested.

Now, the available evidence for many of the miracles, which Catholics believe to have continuously occurred in the history of the Church, can be tested and, as a matter of fact, is often most rigorously tested. This is always the case, when there is question of Beatification or Canonisation of Saints. It is perfectly true that often we may be unable at the present day to examine the evidence for specific miracles that are alleged to have been worked by Saints of "Primitive Times" or of the Middle Ages. But such miracles could be tested by those who witnessed them as they occurred.

Of course when all men really believed in the supernatural, their minds would be open to conviction as to its recurring phenomena; but it is a mere supposition that men of the 4th or the 13th or any other century were more superstitious than are those of the 20th. Human nature was the same then as it is now. Indeed, there is no proof that the Faithful in the Middle Ages yielded to the gross superstitions which fill so large a place in the lives of many fashionable people in London and Paris to-day. The soothsayers of Bond Street would have had few clients in the Ages of Faith, and those clients would have been debarred from the use of the Sacraments.

Besides, we need not for the moment concern ourselves with the evidence for the miracles of the 13th or the 4th century. It will abundantly suffice for our purpose to examine some of those of the 19th and 20th. Just as the miracles of the Middle Ages disposed men to believe in those of which they read in the Gospels and the Acts, so do miracles of our own time incline us the more readily to accept those of the past. "God is not as man that He should change, nor as the Son of man that He should be changed." In His workings "He is the same yesterday to-day and for ever." That which He does to-day, we are not surprised to hear that He did yesterday, and we are quite confident that He will do to-morrow.

Any man to-day, who cares to take a little trouble, may find overwhelming evidence, which he can easily test, for the presence of the Miraculous in his midst —in the Catholic Church—for the working, that is to say, of miracles quite as wonderful, and as clearly surpassing the powers of nature—miracles therefore to the non-Christian quite as *surprising* as any of which he may read in the Bible or in the lives of mediæval Saints.

I think it hardly probable that a Catholic priest will be engaged for ten years of active ministry in England without coming across such wonderful works of God within his own experience. I myself have known several such. In any case it is open to any man, be he priest, or layman, Catholic, Protestant, or unbeliever, who is able to read Latin, to peruse the *Acta Beatificationis* or *Canonisationis* published in Rome of any Saint who is raised to our Altars, and there he will see for himself that the evidence required for the miracles which are accepted in the case, is such as would be accepted without a moment's hesitation in any court of justice in the world.

Lourdes.

And, above all, for those who know no Latin and have no leisure for long examination, there is easily accessible the overwhelming evidence of Lourdes. Many books have been written in well-nigh every modern tongue, providing portions of that evidence. No book has been written in any tongue attempting to disprove that evidence.

Zola.

Zola—it is perfectly true—declared that he would undertake the task, and every facility was given him at the Grotto (at the *Bureau des Constatations* and elsewhere) that he might examine all the evidence available. Nothing was kept back from him. All his questions were answered. In the result he published a book, *falsifying the evidence*, and, when he was reproached, contented himself with the remark that, since what he had written was a romance, accuracy of statement was not to be expected at his hand—for in a work of fiction no one looks for facts. The one attempt that has been made to discredit the miracles of Lourdes is admittedly *fiction*: that the miracles are not fiction but *facts* no one who has examined the evidence has dared, at least publicly, to question. Lourdes, therefore, in its miraculous character, as giving constant supernatural evidence to the goodness of God and to the powerful intercession of His Immaculate Mother, remains unassailed and unassailable.

It is the story of the Empty Tomb over again. If the Jews could have produced the Body of our Lord how glad they would have been. It would have settled the whole matter once for all. Similarly to-day there is nothing that would rejoice the French anti-Christian more than to be able to prove that Lourdes is due either to *fraud* or *hallucination*. But in the presence of the facts he can but remain dumb. Before the phenomena of Lourdes, only two attitudes are possible. It must be either—Glory to God in His wonderful works—or silence. For no one nowadays is likely to attribute the Lourdes miracles, as those worked by our Lord in Palestine were attributed by His enemies, to an Evil Spirit. Nor can many of these miracles, involving the instantaneous cure of such organic diseases as tuberculosis, cancer, lupus, blindness, and deafness, be due to any natural law. No natural law can possibly produce instantaneously the regeneration of tissues affected with lesion. For such a result, if due to a natural cause, would show the destruction of nature as we know it, and its reconstruction on another and a different plan. Once grant the reality of many of the cures of Lourdes, concerning the reality of which there is no room for doubt—after having observed their connection with prayer to Christ and His Immaculate Mother—and they become a striking evidence to Christianity—above all to the great truth of the Incarnation of God, born, in time, of Mary the Virgin, herself conceived, through the merits of her Son, without original sin.

If anyone wishes to satisfy himself that these words are by no means words of exaggeration, he has only to turn to the literature of Lourdes. If he possess any medical knowledge, we can refer him to the work of Dr. Boissarie (*Les Grandes Guérisons de Lourdes,* Paris, 1901), or to *Lourdes Histoire Médicale,* 1858-1891 (Paris, 1891), or to Dr. Georges Bertrin's article on Lourdes in the Catholic Encyclopædia, or to the same writer's *Histoire Critique des événements de Lourdes, Apparitions et Guérisons* (translated into English by Mrs. Philip Gibbs, London, 1909); whilst for a non-scientific reader it will be sufficient to consult Mgr. Benson's *Lourdes* (in The Catholic Library). Let a candid enquirer read any of these books, and he will certainly be content. Or if he desire the evidence clearly given for *one* miracle he may turn to

Fr. Joyce's account of the cure of *Pierre de Rudder*;[1] In this case, at the moment of prayer before an image of our Lady of Lourdes, bones which had been broken for seven years (de Rudder was a farm labourer and his left leg had been crushed in an accident) were suddenly united, *the lost piece of bone was restored* and a suppurating wound was gone. After Pierre's death casts of the bones, *showing where the new bone had been formed*, were made and exhibited; and amongst other medical men, sixty-five doctors (it is right to say that they were all Catholics) who met at Paris to discuss the subject, were unanimously of opinion that it was an evident miracle.

The Fact of Lourdes.

But I am inclined to think that, however overwhelming the evidence as to the miracles of Lourdes undoubtedly is, the very *fact* of Lourdes even more unhesitatingly carries conviction to my mind. Scientific men may dispute concerning the exact nature of the miracles. The fact itself is incontestable.

Let me shortly explain my meaning. We can all of us give some account of the gradual manner in which Rome, London, Paris, Oxford—any of the famous cities of the world—have arrived at their present state of development. We are acquainted with their history. Now what is the history of Lourdes?

Here are the salient facts briefly summarised. At the present moment Lourdes is a most flourishing little French town in the Pyrenees, possessing two great churches, hung with the flags of all nations (coming not only from Europe, but from America and from the Antipodes), and noted for its well, which is visited from the ends of the earth. There are men living at Lourdes now who will tell you that they remember a time when there was no Lourdes. How did it all grow up ?

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[1] *The Question of Miracles*, pp. 112-116.

Only one answer to this question is possible. In the year 1854 an unlettered child named Bernadette Soubirous declared that a Lady had appeared to her in the rocks, had made herself known as the Virgin conceived without sin, had, after several apparitions, at last ordered her to stoop and scratch the ground, and had prophesied that where she scratched a well should spring up, which would be miraculous, that people should come from the ends of the world to honour her, and should be cured of all diseases. These words were repeated by Bernadette in the presence of thousands ; in all simplicity she did as she was commanded ; the waters gushed forth ; all has been accomplished as the Lady predicted.

About these facts there is no doubt. They are admitted. What conclusion but one is it possible to draw ?

Lourdes is a city truly created in the 19th century by the Immaculate Mother of Jesus Christ. It is the Blessed Virgin's work and remains a *Standing Monument* to the Truth of Christianity, the existence of which none who have dispassionately examined the evidence have been able to gainsay, even though they would.

A Lourdes Miracle.

Perhaps I may be permitted to close this chapter with a personal experience. Some years ago I was asked to meet an eminent medical man, who had told his Catholic wife that he had been obliged by his "reason" to give up the belief in Christianity in which he had been nurtured, that he greatly regretted this as a misfortune, that he recognised that Catholicism was the only consistent form of Christianity, and that if a priest or anybody else could give him adequate grounds for faith, he would most gladly submit his mind to God's Revelation. Well, we had our interview. I commenced with submitting to him the evidence of Christ's Resurrection. He admitted that if this was true, everything else followed of necessity. He was quite unable to put forward any hypothesis which would account for the facts, excepting on the supposition that the Apostles were neither deceivers nor dupes, but simply spoke the truth and testified to what they had seen.

"But," he said at last, "this most wonderful event, unique as you state in the history of the world, is supposed to have happened two thousand years ago. Though I grant that I cannot account for the facts, you must in your turn grant that we cannot now cross-examine the witnesses, and that Christianity is a tremendous superstructure to build upon evidence so far back in the world's history."

I replied that I should, I confessed, have some sympathy with this feeling, if the Resurrection stood alone, but pointed out that, far from standing alone, it had led up to a long succession of miracles worked by the power of the Risen and Ascended Lord.

"Modern miracles!" he answered, "who believes in *them?*"

Instead of replying, as I might have done, "All who have examined them dispassionately"—I said, "Well, I will give you one case," and I told him of a young woman who, until the age of fifteen, had been unable to read any but the largest print, or to do any sewing but the plainest. The doctors said that she suffered from double astigmatism of one eye, and from shortsightedness of the other; she was also born colour blind and with a very bad squint, which was cured by an operation at the age of twelve. This operation was by itself sufficient to render any natural amelioration of her sight impossible. When she was fifteen years old she went to Lourdes *to pray for somebody else,* and there, after a Procession of the Blessed Sacrament, obtained the perfect use of her own sight. Seventeen years have passed since then, during all of which time she has been able to do the finest sewing and read the finest print.

She now often occupies herself with embroidery such as Venetian point lace, which is extraordinarily trying for the best eyes, and in painting miniatures, which requires a minute power of detecting varying shades—so completely has her colour blindness been cured—an affection which is in itself absolutely incurable by natural agency. Before her cure she was a martyr to headaches, due to her defective eyesight; since her visit to Lourdes these have completely disappeared.

My medical friend smiled contemptuously: "Wrong diagnosis," he exclaimed. "No one with double astigmatism can see to read, any more than you can see through a brick wall."

"She is in the house," I said, "at this moment. She has waited in on purpose. You can examine, if you will, now at once, both the state of her eyes and the power of her eyesight. Here is a test case."

My doctor looked startled. He took up his hat and gloves, with the remark, "Good afternoon. Many thanks for your trouble. As for your case, I should be only wasting her time and mine, if I were to examine it. *What you tell me is impossible.*" [1]

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[1] The young lady to whom this happened has read this. She lives in London. Should any of my readers wish me to do so I will gladly put them into communication with her, and she will as gladly give them any detailed information concerning the facts of her case for which they may ask. I have heard those facts myself, not only from her own lips, but also from her father and mother, as well as from an aunt who was with her at Lourdes at the time of the miracle.

I could only repeat to myself the Words of our Lord: "If they will not believe Moses and the Prophets, neither will they believe, should one rise from the dead."

Some few months before his death, I heard Mgr. Benson say at the close of a triumphant lecture on Lourdes:

"They tell us that miracles do not happen, because they cannot. We reply that we know that miracles can happen, because they do."

Truer words than these were never uttered.

Miracles are an irrefragable proof of the truth of the Christian religion, to which, explicitly or implicitly, they bear unshaken witness.

CHAPTER IX

THE ARGUMENT FROM EXPERIENCE

The argument from Experience to the Existence of God and

IT may be well at this point to say something as to the argument for the truth of Christianity derived from Experience. The fact that all over the world, as far back as we possess the records of our race, we find men believing in a Supreme Being, together with the fact that the same belief is so general to-day that the exception only serves to confirm the rule, is quite fairly taken in itself to create a presumption of the Existence of God.

All experience proves that a contest waged against any universal and fundamental conviction of mankind is foredoomed to ultimate failure. "Naturam expellas furca, tamen usque recurret."

Men drunk with passion may pitchfork God out of the church of Notre Dame—human nature, human needs, human sorrows before many years are past, will beseech Him to return. Such is the result of all experience. A state of society, which is atheist, never has persisted, nor can such a state be conceived as of long duration.

Now, it may be fearlessly asserted that as men need God, so, if the necessities of their souls are to be fully satisfied, do they need Christ. He did not fear to say: "You believe in God, believe also in Me."[1] And, as experience proves—so all will tell you who have made the venture—Christ always keeps His promises and never fails those who trust Him and take Him at His Word.

to the Truth of Christianity.

"My peace I give unto you; My peace I leave with you." "He that cometh to Me shall not hunger, and he that believeth in Me shall never thirst." "Him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out."[2] "Come unto Me, all ye who are weary and heavy laden and find rest for your souls, for My Yoke is easy and My Burden is light."[3] How many millions since these sweet and prophetic words first were uttered have gone to our Lord, to take up His Yoke and to shoulder His Burden, and thus find rest for their souls! Of them all, not one has, save through his own turning away, been disappointed. This is a mighty fact. Moreover, it is an isolated fact, for no Founder of any other religion has made any such appeal. It is no doubt a fact, of which the appeal is limited. Those who have never seriously attempted to go to Christ as their Lord and Master and Friend will not appreciate it by any personal experience, but they too may awake to its significance if they will observe it in the history of Christianity.

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[1] John xiv. 1.

[2] John vi. 35, 37; Matt. xi. 29, 30.

[3] Acts iv. 5, 13.

The Experience of the first Disciples of Christ.

We may begin at the very beginning. Jesus of Nazareth gathered round Him a handful of disciples. When first they knew Him, they were evidently (as with their antecedents was inevitable) men of narrow views, slow to learn, without the advantage of a liberal education—we read that "the princes and ancients and scribes understood that they were illiterate and ignorant men"[1]—unpromising material with which to move the world. But "they had been with Jesus Christ,"[2] and little by little had fallen under His Divine influence. One by one they were drawn closer and closer to His Side. They began to learn the Mysteries of the Kingdom of God. He fashioned their lives and controlled their thoughts and directed their aspirations. More and more they felt the need of Him; more and more they submitted their lives to One who assured them that they had not chosen Him, but that He had chosen them, lovingly, for His mysterious and fruitful purposes.

Nor had long time passed, as men count time, when He taught a sublime Truth, which scandalised the crowd of Jews, who had been drawn by the fame of His miracles idly to question Him. They said: "It is a hard saying, and who can hear it?"[3] and—

[1] Acts iv. 13.
[2] John xv. 16.
[3] John vi. 61.

we should remember that they had not, like the Apostles, lived with Him—they turned aside and "walked no more with Him."[1] But to His intimate disciples, to those who had listened day by day to His Words, and begun to know and to love Him—to them He said: "Will you also go away?" Peter the leader of the Apostolic Band, answered at once: "Lord, to whom shall we go?"[2] To leave Him were impossible. He and He only had the Words of Eternal Life. To desert Him for another were treason not to be imagined. Indeed there is no other to whom any man can turn, with aught but despair in his heart, who has once known Christ. Shall we leave Him for gold, as Judas was to leave Him? Or shall we leave Him for the pleasures of sense to wallow with the swine? Or shall we harden our hearts and leave Him because we will not make the venture and strive, relying upon His grace, to take up our cross and follow in His footsteps? To leave Him is to fare forth into the outer darkness, the darkness that can be felt, the darkness of despair.

And that of those who have never seen Him.

The effect produced on Peter and the Apostles by Jesus Christ, leading them gladly for His sake to give up all things—even to die a cruel death for love of Him—cannot have been merely (as men talk nowadays) the result of the fascination of a magnetic human personality. For, effects the same in kind

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[1] John vi. 67.

[2] John vi. 68, 69.

(sometimes, as in the case of the great Saints, the same even in degree) as were produced upon those who lived with Jesus Christ, are still produced by His grace in the hearts and lives of those who have never heard His Voice nor seen His Face. So St. Peter was able to write to the first Christians of our Blessed Lord: "That the trial of your faith may be found unto praise and glory and honour at the appearance of Jesus Christ, *whom not having seen you love.*"[1]

Nor can it be argued that the prize in this world offered by Christ to His followers is attractive to human nature, apart from the love of Him. What other religious teacher has succeeded in inducing men through long centuries to take up their cross and deny themselves? What other religion save the religion of the Crucified, is able without fear to say to those who would embrace it: Remember whom God loveth He chasteneth and He scourgeth every son whom He receiveth?

Such is the experience of Christians in every age. We have not seen Him. Yet not only do we believe in Him; we also love Him, and we wish and strive to love Him with all our hearts. His influence upon the souls of men stands as a thing apart.

It is a *fact*, which cannot be questioned, that in the history of the world no man, excepting one Man alone, has excited that unique *love* in the hearts of other men which in all the succeeding centuries men have given, and which men now give, to Jesus Christ. No one now living *loves* Napoleon or Florence Nightingale. And this is true of false gods. No one has, or ever had, any personal feeling towards Isis or Minerva. But the world is full of people surrendering things for which they care, and conquering themselves, out of personal love for Christ. How can this be explained unless our Lord be that which He claimed to be, God as well as Man? In the whole story of humanity there is nothing to which we may liken men's love for Christ. And it has been so from the beginning since Christ walked upon the earth; it is a phenomenon which has not admitted of variation during the Christian ages. Catholics know that, for them at least, it is an evidence of the work of divine grace within the souls of men.

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[1] 1 Pet. i. 7, 8.

St. Paul's love for Christ.

Take the story of St. Paul. A Pharisee of the Pharisees, strict beyond his peers in the observance of the Law. "I made progress," he himself tells us, "in the Jews' religion above many of my equals in my own nation, being more abundantly zealous for the traditions of my fathers."[1] Suddenly he came to know our Lord. From that moment he gave himself without reserve to serve and to love, and soon to preach, Christ and Him crucified.[2] To this he devoted his whole life and all his splendid energies, "condescending not to flesh and blood,"[1] suffering all things, enduring all things, hoping all things, "bearing in his body the marks of the Lord Jesus,"[2] able to pour forth his whole heart in burning words which find an echo in every other heart that has ever yielded itself to our Lord Jesus Christ: "I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor might, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the Love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."[3]

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[1] Gal. i. 14.

[2] 1 Cor. i. 23.

This, we repeat, is not the experience merely of an individual (though when that individual is one who was such as was Saul of Tarsus, and such as Paul, the prisoner of Christ, became—even as an isolated experience—it would be sufficiently remarkable in itself); it is, in due measure and degree, the experience of every Christian. We find it, predominant, stamping the whole life with its distinctive mark, so that no man may mistake it, in the lives of great Saints such as Augustine and Francis of Assisi and Ignatius Loyola and Margaret of Cortona, some of whom, as we learn the story of their lives and read their writings, seem to us to reproduce before men in their own generation the conversion and the love of St. Paul. But we find it also, often jealously guarded and hidden away—"my secret is my own," says the faithful soul to her Lord—in the souls of all those who strive to follow Christ. He will not suffer those who love Him to be alone, but teaches them to find His Presence close to them in all their ways. He is ever by their side and never abandons those who seek Him.

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[1] Gal. i. 16.
[2] Gal. vi. 17.
[3] Rom. viii. 38.

Mgr. Benson's witness.

Words to be found in a poem called *Christian Evidences*, written by one, whose loss the Church is mourning as I write, will serve to illustrate my meaning.

Nay, but with Faith I sought my Lord last night;
  And found Him shining where the lamp was dim;
The shadowy altar glimmered, height on height,
    A Throne for Him,
Seen, as through lattice work, His gracious Face
Looked forth on me and filled the dark with grace.

Nay then, if proof and tortured argument
  Content thee—teach thee that the Lord is there,
Or risen again; I pray thee be content,
    But leave me here
With eye unsealed by any proof of thine,
With eye unsealed to know the Lord is mine.

Prove if thou wilt, my friend, that Paul is Paul,
  And Peter Peter; talk till crack of doom;
Marshal thy facts; yes, yes, I know them all;
    And, spite of gloom,
Of all the dust and science raised by thee,
I saw my Lord was there who smiled on me.

Thou dost believe that, ah, so long ago
He lived, wrought marvels and was crucified,
Because that Holy Matthew tells thee so?
I, on my side,
Know Him as Love; and Love could not pass by
And leave men sinning—therefore Love must die.

Thou dost believe, because He rose again
That Christ is very God? Yet I believe
He rose, because I see Him walk with me,
Sinners receive,
Loose stammering tongues, open the blindest eyes,
And none but God doth so; and God must rise!

Of course no man who ever lived was more keen and alert than Monsignor Benson on urging the Christian Evidences in their proper place. The beautiful lines, which I have quoted, seem to me to represent in a certain sense his own protest against one side of himself. He would remind himself and others too of that which he had deeply experienced—that there is something which transcends all argument—the Love of Christ.

As Mr. Meynell says admirably in his Preface to Father Benson's Poems:

> "In *Christian Evidences* he gets back to his intuitions; to that which made him, ardent investigator though he was, ever in closer touch with the simple than with the scientific—back to that *witness within himself* which Christ promises and gives to all His Own."

Such is the Argument from Experience.

An investigator into the phenomena of Christianity can hardly ignore it safely, when he finds itself reproducing itself for close on two thousand years in millions of souls, of all degrees of intelligence and culture, scattered over the face of the world.

Collective experience concerning the Needs of the Soul.

So far we have referred only to individual experience. But there is, besides, such a thing as collective experience. Not only is it true that men have always felt the need of God, but also the religious instinct, if it is given fair play has certain spiritual wants and aspirations.

For example:

(*a*) The yearning for God as our Father to which Philip the Apostle gave utterance, when he exclaimed: "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us,"

(*b*) And for such knowledge of God, as may enable us to believe in Him, to hope in Him and to love Him.

(*c*) The sense of the need of forgiveness, springing from a sense of sin.

(*d*) The desire for knowledge concerning the Life beyond the grave and the way to God,

(*e*) And for an ethical code, supplementary to the rudimentary Moral Law given to all;

(*f*) And for a way to worship God by sacrifice,

(*g*) And for an Incarnation, a Mother, Sacraments (especially Communion), inspired Books or Persons,

(*h*) And for communion with those who have gone before us to the world that is beyond sight.

These needs all satisfied by Christianity.

Now, when we examine the great religions of the world, we shall find that each of them supplies some of these needs, but that Catholic Christianity alone supplies them all.

Thus, Judaism and Mohammedanism teach strongly the Unity of God, though they hardly make known His Fatherhood—at least in the sense understood by Christians. All religions lay stress on a moral code of some kind. The religions of ancient Egypt and Assyria and Babylon all insisted on the sense of sin; Buddhism dwells on the importance of striving for a goal beyond the limits of the things of sense, and upon the need of purification. Mohammedanism impresses on its adherents Faith and Trust in God, Judaism requires also that He should be served and loved. The duty of sacrifice is insisted upon by Judaism, Brahmanism, the ancient religions of Greece and Rome, of Egypt and of Mexico and Peru. Comtism is mainly concerned with honouring the great examples of virtue given by our race and Shintoism with honouring the dead. This list might be indefinitely extended. For example various forms of paganism witnessed to that desire for the

Divine Incarnation, for a Heavenly Mother, for Sacramental Rites, which we believe to have been divinely implanted in the souls of men. Every religion supplies some spiritual need of humanity, but Catholic Christianity supplies them all and in the most perfect form that can be imagined.

Christianity points (*a*) to God as our Father and our Friend. It teaches us (*b*) how and why we should believe in His Word and trust in His Promises—above all why and how we should love Him, who is our First Beginning, and our Last End, who is our Saviour and our Brother, who became one of us for love of us, died for us upon the Cross, and has poured His Spirit into our hearts. It forces us (*c*) to acknowledge our sinfulness, but never allows us to forget that there is pardon for the repentant sinner, for whom it (*d*) opens the gates of Heaven, through Him who is the Way to our Father and His.

Christianity has given us (*e*) the most perfect moral code the world has ever known. What so sublime as the Sermon on the Mount? Who can surpass in sublimity the precepts of charity and forgiveness left us by Christ? What more perfect than the exhortation: "Learn of Me, for I am meek and humble of heart"?

Christianity—at least Catholic Christianity—has given us (*f*) a daily Sacrifice, whereby we can worship God in spirit and in truth, uniting our poor offerings, our weak wills and sometimes our broken hearts, with the sublime Offering, the all-holy yet Human Will, the Sacred Heart of His Son made Man.

Christianity—at least Catholic Christianity—gives us (*g*) not only inspired Books to guide our path to God, but also a sacred Hierarchy to teach us, and God's Mother to be our Mother.

Catholic Christianity (*h*) supplies the craving common to us all, teaching us how, without superstition, we may help the dead and enter into communion with those who have already gone to God.

In a word, there is no legitimate craving of the human soul, which will not find its full satisfaction in the religion of Christ.

Now, everything which satisfies the vital needs of men, the air we breathe, the food with which we nourish our bodies, the water we drink, comes from God—and, as it is in the natural order, so also is it in the supernatural. The religion which when we test it never fails us, which provides for all our necessities, which teaches us how to rise from sin, which directs us to the perfect worship of God, which sets before us an ideal to be aimed at in all the stages of life, which, in proportion as we use it, leads us on from strength to strength, from grace to grace, which teaches us, whilst disciplining our own character, to help our fellow-beings in this world and in the next, which teaches us, whilst we live on earth, to " have our conversation in Heaven" with those separated from us now only by the boundaries of sense—this religion manifestly is divine.

This argument to be employed with caution. It requires to be supplemented by the external grounds of faith.

Such is the evidence from experience. As is clear, it must be employed with caution, since when we talk of our experiences we have to be on our guard against the possibilities of delusion, or of persuading ourselves that things are as we would have them to be, merely because we so wish it. In other words, it is always well, and sometimes it may be necessary, to check the subjective argument from experience—however convincing to the individual—by the objective argument from visible facts. When thus supplemented and verified it is at least of considerable weight, not only to the individual who experiences it himself, but also to the observer who watches it in others and knows that their conviction as to the truth of Christianity arising from their personal experiences is not an idiosyncrasy. If he will but take the necessary steps, that conviction shall be his also.

CHAPTER X

THE EVIDENCE FROM THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

The Catholic Church.

The Fathers of the Vatican Council, having laid it down that God has deigned to give external proofs of His Revelation, which it terms "divine facts," and having specified especially Prophecies and Miracles, proceed as follows:

"And the Catholic Church herself, *through herself*, by reason that is of her wondrous growth, her matchless sanctity, her inexhaustible fruitfulness in all good works, her unity throughout the world and her unconquerable persistence, is both a great and ever-present motive of credibility and an irrefragable testimony to her own divine commission."

In other words, the Catholic Church is, also, like Prophecies and Miracles, a "Divine Fact."

Limits of space render it impossible to do more than glance at this great argument.

We all know the stress that Christian Apologists have always laid both upon the supernatural growth of Christianity in its first ages in face of manifold persecutions and difficulties of all kinds, and upon the spiritual regeneration which it effected in all grades of society. In proportion as men submitted themselves wholeheartedly to the influence of Christianity, in that proportion did they become better men. In numberless cases they became visibly and vitally new men. The Christian Life was a new creation—a creation in the supernatural order, a reality to which that Life bore witness. We are probably aware of the attempt made by Gibbon to dispose of this argument, and to account for the spread of Christianity by merely natural causes, and are also aware of Newman's answer to Gibbon. Suffice it to say here that the growth of the religion of Christ, under the adverse circumstances which confronted it, is undeniably an event without a parallel in history.

The growth and spread of the Church.

When the Vatican Council appealed, as an evidence of the truth of Christianity not only to the growth of the Church, but also to her "matchless sanctity and her inexhaustible fruitfulness in all good works," it was not meant—as is manifest—that every Catholic is holy, or that every Catholic is fruitful in good works. The opposite is alas! all too clear. We were warned from the beginning that tares must—of necessity, for man's will is free—grow up alongside of the wheat in the Field of the Lord, and that bad fish will always be

The Church's Sanctity.

found with good in Peter's net. What the Vatican Council did mean was that certain members of the Church—St. Francis of Assisi, St. Theresa, St. Francis of Sales, St. Francis Xavier, an innumerable number of her children besides her Canonised Saints, have reached such heights of sanctity as are plainly above the powers of nature, and can only be accounted for by divine assistance. It was meant further that the sacramental system of the Church, which provides all men who will avail themselves of it, with every grace that they require for their life's journey—to strengthen the will in its struggle against sin, and to provide for the manifold needs of the soul—is so harmonious in its component parts and so extraordinarily in accordance with human necessities and the most essential cravings and needs of our nature, as to point, for those who have eyes to see, to a divine origin. This argument, in the very nature of the case, will appeal with special force to Catholics. All my readers, however, if they are at all conversant with the ascetical and mystical literature produced by Catholicism, will be able without difficulty to pursue it for themselves.

The fruitfulness of the Catholic Church in good works.

Again, the Vatican Council claims that "the inexhaustible fruitfulness in good works," as evidenced (for example in the spiritual and charitable activities of the various Religious Orders) is plainly supernatural. And once more I do not think that anyone who is acquainted with the facts, even in broad outline, will lightly permit himself to say "nay" to this claim.

Her unity throughout the world and persistence.

But it is through her visible "unity throughout the world and her unconquerable persistence" that the Catholic Church appears to me above all to bear witness, that cannot be shaken, to the truth of Christianity. She is *one* in her government, in her worship and in her faith—and this "throughout the world"; not only in title but in fact she is *Catholic;* and she *persists*, for she is founded upon an indestructible Rock.

St. Augustine and the Catholic Church as a proof of the Truth of Christianity.

Early in the fifth century, the fact that the Church was World-wide, yet One, appealed to St. Augustine, as being already the most *striking* and the most *easily verified* of the various proofs of the truth of Christianity.[1] Thus in several passages in his writings, he makes this statement:

"The Apostles believed in the Promises of Christ about His Church that they did not see, because they saw the Head [and His Miracles]. We believe now in the Head, whom we do not see, because of His Body, the Church, which we do see." He has kept His promises concerning the Church and has effected that which was humanly unattainable—

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[1] *Cf. De Fide rerum quæ non videntur,* iii. 5; *Sermo* ccxxxvii.; *In diebus Paschalitus,* ix. 3, etc.

therefore seeing His Mystical Body before our eyes, we the more easily believe in Him who is the Head.

St. Augustine indeed, as is well known, went so far as to declare that he could not believe the Gospels, were it not for the authority of the Catholic Church.[1] For unless the Church existed, One and yet World-wide, there would be no living continuous witness to the Gospels, handing down its testimony to their truth in unbroken succession from apostolic times; and the predictions in the Gospel—for example, that Christ would gather the hitherto "dispersed" people of God into a unity,[2] and that the gates of Hell should not prevail against His Church[3]—would not have been verified. But, they have been verified.

It was beyond the power of mere man to verify such predictions as these. *Therefore*, Christ was not mere Man. He was that which He claimed to be—God—and Christianity is true. This is the argument. It is an argument which, strong in the fifth century after Christ, is far stronger in the twentieth. Every generation that has passed since then has increased its strength, making it increasingly difficult to explain, on any human grounds whatsoever, the fact of the Church, and especially that she is at the same time World-wide (or *Catholic*) and *One*, and that she *persists* in the face of an environment so hostile to all fixed doctrine as that of a great part of Europe during the past two centuries. In human things it is impossible to maintain unity amongst the rivalries of nations, the diversities of races and the clash of tongues; moreover, all human institutions sooner or later dissolve and their place knows them no more. The Church, however, persists, and the Church maintains her world-wide unity. *Therefore*, the force which sustains her is not human but divine.

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[1] *Contra Ep. Fundam*, v.

[2] John xi. 52.

[3] Matt. xvi. 18.

The Papacy and the Promises of Christ.

Now, let us look for a moment at these two great phenomena—the Unity of Catholicism all over the world, and the persistence of Catholicism—and we shall see that, whether men are pleased to admit it or not, they depend under God upon the Papacy. Common sense will tell us, and experience has abundantly proved, that you cannot have a world-wide Visible Unity without a visible centre of that Unity. Let men depend for visible unity upon a centre that is invisible, and the result has always been nationalism in religion and endless divisions in religious opinion. It is absolutely certain that if, by an impossible supposition, you were to abolish the authority of the Pope to-morrow, Catholicism would split the day after, just as Protestantism has split from the days of its first beginnings, and throughout the whole course of its history. And not only the unity, but also the persistence, of Catholicism depends upon the Papacy. Without the Pope, all sailors in the

Church's Barque would be at sea, at the mercy of the waves and storms. Without the Pope, the house of the Catholic Church would crumble to pieces. Nothing could stay its disintegration.

Such are the facts before our eyes, which will be challenged by none. Men admit them when they call Catholicism—meaning the only Church which is at once One and World-wide—*Roman Catholicism*—a clumsy method of expressing the visible fact that the only Church which is world-wide in her circumference is Roman in her centre.

Now, if we ask ourselves how this fact is to be accounted for, we shall at once see that there would be no Papacy to-day had not Jesus Christ lived of old in Palestine. This again will not be denied, for what are sometimes called the "Roman claims" are based—we are at the moment not discussing whether they are rightly or wrongly based, but they *are* based—upon certain words spoken long ago by Jesus Christ and recorded in the Gospels. Those words are there for all men to read. They were written before the Popes had even reached the Catacombs, when Christians in Rome were still but a small proportion of the inhabitants of the City.

If we recall one—the most famous—of these sayings of Christ, I think that my meaning will be clear. It is recorded by St. Matthew that one day Jesus of Nazareth asked His disciples whom men said that He was. They replied variously according to the various current talk of the hour. But, He said to them, "Whom do *you* say that I am?" to which one of their number, Simon the fisherman, to whom Christ had already declared that He would give the new name of Peter (in Hebrew Cephas), which means a rock, replied: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." And Jesus accepted it, and said to him in His turn: "Blessed art thou Simon, son of John, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father who is in Heaven, and I say unto thee that thou art Cephas [this in reply to Simon's 'Thou art the Christ'] and upon this Cephas I will build My Church, and I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of Heaven and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it."

Now, if by these words Christ looked forward into the future, and thus provided (as Catholics believe), for His Church which was to come, so that she should be built upon a Rock and the Gates of Hell should not prevail against her—then He was God, and the Christian religion is true. Manifestly, no mere man could have the foreknowledge and power to make such provision through the centuries.

If Christ be not God, He was merely the son of a Jewish carpenter, and Simon Peter was but a Jewish fisherman. Has any other carpenter spoken to any other fisherman words similar to those which Jesus spoke to Simon Peter, and if so, have they bnee verified in history? Once more we are in the presence of that which is without parallel.

This argument is of course another form of that derived from Prophecy—only, when considering it, instead of looking first at the prediction and then recognising its accomplishment, we look first at the fact and then at its intimate connection with the prediction. The Unity of Faith amongst Catholics the wide world over depends upon their belief in the fulfilment of certain promises of Christ. To the pastoral care of one man He committed all His sheep; for that man He prayed that his faith might not fail so that he should be able to strengthen or confirm his brethren; to that man alone He gave the keys of the kingdom of Heaven; on that one man and on his faith He built His Church as upon a Rock. Now, at this moment we are not discussing the question as to whether Catholics are correct in their traditional interpretation of these words of Christ—which for them has been settled beyond all doubt by the authoritative teaching of the Church—but we do say to all men of good-will: Look at the result. So great an effect as Catholicism could not have arisen from the mysterious words of a mere carpenter. This seems to me a truism. Look then at the Catholic Church, look well at the Rock on which she has been built, and you will surely see that He who knew by such simple means how to produce such vast results is what He claimed to be—the Son of the

Living God. The fulfilment of the *Thou art Peter* before our eyes proves the truth of the words of Peter: *Thou art the Christ the Son of the Living God.*

To judge of the force of this argument we must stand far back from our present point of view and place ourselves by the side of Jesus of Nazareth and His disciples. Then let us look, *from the shores of the Lake of Galilee* to St. Peter's in Rome, and read the words blazoned on its dome: "Thou art Peter, and upon this Peter I will build My Church"—and remember what has been the outcome of those words spoken not in the West but in the East, not in Rome but in Palestine.

This at least is certain. Those who first heard Christ make His promises to Peter, would have believed in Him could they have seen the actual accomplishment of these great promises.

It as clearly requires divine power and divine wisdom to have evolved the Catholic Church throughout the world from her beginnings in Palestine as to produce the spreading oak from the tiny acorn.

The Catholic Church depends upon the Word of Christ, as the effect depends upon its cause. His Word is operative. It effects that which it says, because He is the Very Word of God Incarnate.

Now, if this be the case, Christianity is true.[1]

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[1] I have worked this argument out in detail, with reference to various phenomena of Catholicism, in *The Mustard Tree* (Messrs. Washbourne).

CHAPTER XI

BELIEF IN CHRISTIANITY INVOLVES BELIEF IN THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST, AND ALSO BELIEF IN ALL THAT CHRIST TAUGHT

What is to be understood by Christianity.

We may now proceed on the supposition that not only belief in God—Theism—but also that belief in Jesus Christ—in Christianity—is eminently reasonable. But a further question arises, at least in England—

"What exactly ought we to understand by Christianity?" If we would answer this question to our own satisfaction, it is obviously worse than useless to reply: "Christianity means belief in Jesus Christ." For then the further questions immediately arise: "What do you mean by belief in Jesus Christ?" or, "What does belief in Jesus Christ precisely involve?" Who is Jesus Christ? Is He God? Is it necessary, if you would be a Christian to believe in Him as God? Or is it enough to believe in Him (with modern Unitarians) as "a good man," or as "a perfect man," or (in the manner in which the Mohammedans will assure you that they believe in Him) as a Great Prophet, or, (like the old Arians) as a mysterious Being in a category apart from other men, rightly called the Son of God, yet not One with His Father from eternity? These are ascending steps of dignity, yet the highest of them all is infinitely below the belief of the Catholic Church —for the distance between the belief which one can repose in the highest of creatures and in the Creator of all creatures is plainly infinite.

And, if it is necessary for belief in Jesus Christ to believe that He is the Creator of heaven and earth, is it necessary to believe also that He became true Man, assuming a perfect Human Nature? Or am I free to believe (with the old Eutychians and the "Orthodox" Copts in Egypt of the present time) that His Human Nature was absorbed in His Divinity and therein merged, as a drop of water is merged in a cup of strong wine?

Again, does belief in Him rightly involve belief in the Catholic Church, and in all that the Catholic Church teaches that He has revealed? Or am I free to exercise my private judgement as to the precise import of His teaching and to believe what seems to me right after my private study of the Bible—or is it possible that belief in Him does not carry with it the obligation of believing that He made any supernatural Revelation at all? Am I perhaps free merely to attempt to follow His high ethical teaching as I find it in the Gospels, regarding Him as my supreme moral example, but not troubling about "dogmas" and "mysteries"? May I in a word, content myself with trying to be "good," say happily that we are all "making for the same place," that it does not matter what we believe, that "one religion is as good as another," and yet at the same time be able honestly to say that I believe in Christ? Or does belief in Christ carry with it, of necessity, submission of the intellect to definite Truths as well as submission of the heart and will to the Moral Law?

It is evident, if we would think clearly, that questions such as these—and of course similar questions might be added by the score—must be answered before we know what is meant by Christianity. It is not enough to say: "I believe in Jesus Christ and therefore I am a Christian." You must know what you mean precisely by the belief of which you speak.

A Catholic will find no difficulty in answering such questions as those which I have just suggested. A Catholic knows that his religion is historic, in this, resembling that of the Jews before the coming of Christ—and we must always remember that the Old Testament prefigured and was typical of the New. Belief in Christ involves for the Catholic, of necessary consequence, belief in the Church of Christ, and in the various doctrines and principles which, as the Church solemnly assures him, God has revealed to men by Christ and Christ has committed to her guardianship. The Catholic knows that you cannot, if you would, start everything afresh and reconstruct Christianity according either to your own prepossessions or to those of the passing moment. Such a Christianity would be built upon shifting sand.

In all questions as to what belief in Christ involves the Catholic will listen to that Church which, in the person of the Virgin Mother, knelt before our Lord at Bethlehem and dwelt with Him at Nazareth, to that Church which, with Peter and the other Apostles by our Lady's side, was assembled in the Upper Room when the Pentecostal flames descended, to that Church which, according to the promises of Christ, is to be ever guided "into all Truth" by His Holy Spirit.[1] Her growth and her history have been continuous and normal—normal, that is, according to laws proper to her organisation, as is the growth of a body, and continuous as is the history of one persisting personality.

But, in this country Catholics are in a very small minority. It would be obviously unreasonable to call upon men and women who are not Catholics to accept the teaching of the Catholic Church as to what Christianity really means—merely on her testimony. To those who are not Catholics the teaching of the Catholic Church is indeed far from being authoritative or decisive. They will, (by no means unreasonably from their point of view), call it "unsupported," unless it be supported by their own private views, or by their private interpretation of Scripture, or by their private reading of history. They do not see that it is—often they have no idea even that it may be—supported by the Promises of Christ. If, then, Christians who are not Catholics, should be, for any reason, disturbed in their consciences concerning the character of the religion revealed by Christ, and as to what He would wish them, as His disciples and servants, exactly to believe and to do, the only safe course for them is to go back (as far as they are in a position to do so) to the beginnings of Christianity, that they may learn—and that they may learn especially from the Gospels (considered for the moment merely as historical records)—what Christ Himself intended us to understand by the religion which He introduced into the world. If they are wise, this will not lead them to attempt a hopeless reconstruction, taking no account of the intervening centuries—for in all the works of God essential identity remains unimpaired, however great may be the external changes necessitated by fresh external conditions, as well as by God's own law of growth. But it may well lead them to see in what manner Christ Himself intended us to learn His religion, and what exactly, according to His Will, Christianity was to mean, and what it was to do for men. And, though Catholics stand in no need of any such investigation, since for them in countless ways the Church is her own evidence—still for them too this enquiry may be full of interest, and may serve as well to strengthen their faith.

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[1] John xvi. 13.

Christ claimed to be God.

Now the one great outstanding fact that emerges from a study of the Gospels is that Jesus, the Son of Man, as He was wont to term Himself, claimed to be also the Son of God—and this by no means in the sense in which all the sons of men may rightly be called sons of God, but in an unique signification. For He claimed to be one with the Father, to have existed before Abraham, to have come from the Bosom of the Father, and gave to Himself the incommunicable name of God—*I AM*. His enemies clearly understood that He was in fact claiming to be God, and took up stones to cast at Him as blaspheming. Had He not just said to His disciple Philip, who cried to Him: "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." "Have I been so long with you, and, Philip, hast thou not known Me? He that hath seen Me hath seen also the Father."[1] Than these words no words can be plainer. It may be objected that they are taken from the Fourth Gospel. There is no doubt that our Lord's claim to be God is exposed in more categorical terms by the three first Evangelists than by the last. Now, the reason of this is not far to seek. It is well known that St. John wrote expressly against heretics who were denying the Divinity of

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[1] John xiv. 9.

Jesus Christ. Besides, we may bear in mind the fact that the last Gospel was written when the generation which received the Books of Matthew, Mark, and Luke had well-nigh passed away.

We, who are the heirs of the Christian Tradition concerning the Divinity of Christ, that has come down to us through more than nineteen centuries, can hardly realise what a shock it must have been in the beginning for men to hear that One who under one aspect most certainly was their fellow-man, who lived under the same conditions as themselves, grew up amongst them, ate, drank, slept, was fatigued, lived a common human life, and then died in agony upon the gibbet of a criminal, had claimed to be, and was believed by His disciples to be, the Eternal God. The Mystery of two perfect Natures belonging to one Person—and that Person the Lord God Almighty—had never been imagined until it was taught by the Church of Christ.

Thus we see at once that it was necessary for our Lord to prepare the minds of men to receive this wonderful Dogma. He taught it gradually and only towards the end of His Ministry in express terms. We need not therefore be surprised to find that the early Gospels teach not only by direct affirmation but even more by implication.

St. Peter it is true did not hesitate in his first sermon to speak of his Crucified Lord as "the Lord of Life." Still, the early Gospels might possibly fall into the hands of men who were not so well prepared for this simple Truth as were those to whom St. Peter spoke, and who required to be led to that Truth, step by step, as the Apostles themselves were led by Christ.

However this may be, there can be no doubt that although the first three Evangelists did not commit to writing the express words in which St. John assures us that Christ claimed to have existed before Abraham in the Bosom of the Father, they ascribed to Him, just as clearly as St. John, many words which claim Divine Power and Divine Prerogatives —words which unless He be in truth God, undoubtedly would reach the very height of profanity. Having fallen from the lips of God made Man, these words fill our souls with awe and thanksgiving.

It is not difficult to imagine how we should be forced to characterise them, had they been spoken by any merely human teacher. For example, St. Luke records that Christ spoke thus: "No one knoweth who the Son is but the Father; and who the Father is but the Son, and to whom the Son will reveal Him."[1] This passage has been termed "an aerolite from the skies of John."

Christ is represented by Matthew, Mark, and Luke as speaking to the Jews of the Commandments of God which they so highly and so rightly cherished in such terms as these: "It was said [by God] of old time, but *I* say to you." Our Lord by speaking thus not only interpreted but enlarged the Commandment of God. We also read in the first three Gospels that He declared—and this not once only, but throughout the whole of His Public Ministry, from the Sermon on the Mount to the trial before Caiaphas—that He would judge the world, and explained that the nature of men's future judgement would depend in great measure upon their attitude towards Himself. He had already claimed to be the Ruler of the world, declaring that all things had been delivered unto Him, and that He possessed all authority both in Heaven and on earth. Moreover, His Dominion was not only to be universal, but was to last for ever, since after this world had come to an end the future kingdom of Heaven was still to be His Kingdom, its Angels were to be His Angels, and its citizens His Elect.[1]

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[1] Luke x. 22.

Again and again He insisted upon the necessity of repentance; never once did He ever suggest that there was anything faulty in Himself, anything of which He could repent. Even our Lady, whom Catholics believe to be sinless through the grace and merits of her Son, doubtless prayed that she might in no way displease her Lord. Christ never thus prayed. Sin for Him was impossible. Sin is an offence against God. He is God. This is the attitude which is taken for granted throughout all the Gospels. We have become so accustomed to it that perhaps we may have failed to apprehend its significance. But, if we carefully read through *any one* of the four Gospels *from this point of view*, we can hardly fail to recognise that it is impossible honestly to believe in Christ unless we are prepared to believe His plain statements about Himself. In other words we must believe in Him as being that which He claimed to be, and be ready to make our own the words with which St. Thomas greeted Him after His Resurrection from the dead, as his Lord and his God.

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[1] See Turton's *Truth of Christianity*, p. 502. *Cf.* Matt. xiii. 41; xxiv. 31.

He declared Himself to be the Light of the world, and St. John says of Him that He "was the true Light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and *the world was made by Him*, and the world knew Him not." He is the Word, and in the beginning of the world (as from all Eternity) "the Word was God."

Should any further proof be needed that Christians regarded Christ from the first as their Lord and God, it will be furnished by the writings of St. Paul. Now, St. Paul tells us three things about the doctrine that he preached:—

The Witness of St. Paul.

(*a*) That he received it not from man—not that is from St. Peter or from any other Apostle—but supernaturally, direct from Christ.[1]

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[1] Gal. i. 1.

(*b*) That when he visited St. Peter and St. James he laid before them the Gospel (or Faith) which he had received and that it corresponded with that which they preached.[1]

(*c*) That it was the same Faith which before his conversion he had persecuted.[2]

Now this Faith as declared by St. Paul involves amongst other truths:

(*a*) The pre-existence of Christ.[3]

(*b*) That "being rich He became poor for our sake."[4]

(*c*) That "being in the form of God, He emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and in habit found as a man."[5]

(*d*) That in Him dwells the fulness of the Godhead bodily.[6]

(*e*) That He is over all.[7]

(*f*) That we shall all stand before His judgement seat.[8]

(*g*) That "He is our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ."[9]

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[1] Gal. ii. 2, 9.

[2] Gal. i. 23.

[3] Rom. viii. 3; Gal. iv. 4.

[4] 2 Cor. viii. 9.

[5] Phil. ii. 6.

[6] Col. ii. 9.

[7] Rom. ix. 5: "Who is over all, God blessed for ever." These last words, however, perhaps, should be translated "May God be blessed for ever." For this reason I have not quoted them in the text.

[8] Rom. xiv. 10; 2 Cor. v. 10.

[9] Titus ii. 13.

One of the most striking testimonies to the belief of the early Christians on this subject is to be found in the opening of the Epistle to the Hebrews. We have here an antithetical balancing of phrases—the one set referring to the Divine, the second to the Human, Nature in Jesus Christ. In order to make this clear I will print the references to our Lord's Divinity in larger type. The passage runs as follows :—

"God . . . in these days has spoken to us	BY HIS SON,
whom He hath appointed heir of all things,	BY WHOM ALSO HE MADE THE WORLD; WHO BEING THE BRIGHTNESS OF HIS GLORY, AND THE FIGURE OF HIS SUBSTANCE, AND UPHOLDING ALL THINGS BY THE WORD OF HIS POWER,
making purgation for sins, sitteth on the Right Hand of the Majesty on High :	BEING SO MUCH BETTER THAN THE ANGELS, AS HE HATH INHERITED A MORE EXCELLENT NAME THAN THEY. FOR TO WHICH OF THE ANGELS HATH HE SAID AT ANY TIME, 'THOU ART MY SON, THIS DAY HAVE I BEGOTTEN THEE ?'[1] AND AGAIN, 'I WILL BE TO HIM A FATHER AND HE SHALL BE TO ME A SON.'

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[1] *Cf.* Acts xiii. 33 ; Ps. ii. 7.

And again when He bringeth in THE FIRST BEGOTTEN into this world He saith :

AND LET ALL THE ANGELS OF GOD ADORE HIM.

And to the Angels indeed He saith : 'He that maketh His angels Spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire.

BUT TO THE SON : THY THRONE, O GOD, IS FOR EVER AND EVER : A SCEPTRE OF JUSTICE IS THE SCEPTRE OF THY KINGDOM.

Thou hast loved justice and hated iniquity : therefore, God, Thy God hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows.

AND : THOU IN THE BEGINNING, O LORD, DIDST FOUND THE EARTH : AND THE WORKS OF THINE HANDS ARE THE HEAVENS. THEY SHALL PERISH, BUT THOU SHALT CONTINUE : AND THEY SHALL ALL GROW OLD AS A GARMENT. AND AS A VESTURE SHALT THOU CHANGE THEM, AND THEY SHALL BE CHANGED : BUT THOU ART THE SELFSAME, AND THY YEARS SHALL NOT FAIL.

But to which of the Angels saith He at any time : Sit on My right hand until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool ? . . . Thou hast made Him a little lower than the angels ; Thou hast crowned Him with glory and honour, and hast set Him over the work of Thine hand, and hast subjected all things under His feet. . . . For no where doth He take hold of the angels: but of the seed of Abraham he taketh hold. Wherefore it behoved Him in all things, to be made like unto His brethren, that He might become a faithful and merciful High Priest before God, that He might be a propitiation for the sins of the people. . . . Who is faithful to Him that made Him, as was also Moses in all his house. For this Man was counted worthy of greater glory than Moses,

BY SO MUCH AS HE THAT HATH BUILT THE HOUSE, HATH GREATER HONOUR THAN THE HOUSE.

For every house is built by some man:

BUT HE THAT CREATED ALL THINGS, IS GOD.

And Moses indeed was faithful in all his house as a servant,

BUT CHRIST AS THE SON IN HIS OWN HOUSE: WHOSE HOUSE ARE WE."[1]

From internal evidence it is certain that the Epistle to the Hebrews was written before the taking of Jerusalem, that is to say before A.D. 70. Consequently we have in the above sonorous passage a sample of the theological teaching given authoritatively to the Christians of the first generation. It is the theological teaching of the Catholic Creeds. Surely then it is abundantly clear that whether we confine ourselves to the words of Christ as recorded in the Gospels, or consider the witness of the New Testament as a whole, the conclusion is the same. If we really are to believe in Christ we must believe that he is God and Man in One Person. This is Christianity as He delivered it to the world, and as His Church has delivered it from the beginning—the Mystery hidden in God from endless ages, the Mystery of the Incarnation of Mary's Son—The Word was made Flesh and dwelt amongst us.[1]

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[1] Heb. i. 1-13; ii. 16, 17; iii. 2-6.

Christ came to teach Supernatural Truths.

But not only is it necessary, if we would believe in Christ, to believe that He is God, it is also necessary to believe that He came to teach supernatural Truth—to make a Revelation to mankind. We read that "at Antioch the disciples were first called CHRISTIANS" because in that city Paul and Barnabas "taught a great multitude." [2] We see that the word Christian from the very first use of the name was employed to denote a man who was *taught*. Christianity denotes definite belief, the outcome of definite teaching.

Christians, like other men, can be taught human knowledge—for example, the natural sciences—by human teachers, but in supernatural knowledge Christians believe that they are "taught by God."

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[1] *Cf.* 1 Tim. iii. 16; 1 Cor. ii. 7; John i. 14.

[2] Acts xi. 26.

And, manifestly, in the sphere of the supernatural no merely human teacher can be of any avail. It is, therefore, of the essence of Christianity to believe that a Christian is taught supernatural truth by Christ—truths which otherwise it would be impossible for him to acquire. Moreover, with regard to the certainty of this supernatural knowledge a Christian may not doubt, for Christ is God. A human teacher may fail us even in a science in which he is most expert. After all, a human teacher, however learned, is always liable to error, and it is always conceivable that he may wilfully lead us astray for his own purposes. God can fail us never.

So it is that the Apostle declares that "the Word was full of Truth, and of His fulness we have all [that is all members of the Apostolic Church] received."[1]

And, Christ Himself declared that He was the Truth,[2] and sent His Apostles to *teach* all nations,[3] promising to send His Holy Spirit "to guide them into all Truth."[4] He promised also "to abide with them unto the consummation of the world."[5] Moreever, He demanded obedience to His teaching under the most terrible penalty: "He that hearkeneth not shall be condemned," and enjoined upon them that they should teach "all things whatsoever He had commanded them."

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[1] John i. 16.

[2] John xiv. 6.

[3] Matt. xxviii. 19; Mark xvi. 15.

[4] John xiv. 16-26; xvi. 13.

[5] Matt. xxviii. 20.

Before the coming of Christ the great civilised nations of the world had yearned for the possession of truth beyond that which can be acquired through the senses. On the banks of the Ganges and the Nile ancient Indian and Egyptian sages had eagerly discussed the spirituality and meaning of life. Most of us have heard of the subtlety of the discussions that were constantly being conducted by the metaphysicians of Athens in the days of her intellectual splendour. Even the great material success of imperial Rome did not altogether quench the cravings for the divine. To this the introduction into Rome of Greek philosophy and oriental forms of worship bear ample witness.

Catholics believe that God had left traces of His primæval Revelation everywhere; still the light shone but dimly in the midst of a darkness that could be felt. Thus, Plato, himself the greatest of idealists, sadly declared that there were questions of the supremest interest to mankind which no man could hope to answer with certainty unless God Himself should come first to answer them.

Pontius Pilate was by no means alone when he asked the great question—not surely then "jesting" —"What is Truth?"[1] But if he would but have listened, he had already received the answer: "For this was I born, and for this came I into the world, that I should give testimony to the Truth."[1]

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[1] John xviii. 38.

This, then, was one of the great purposes of the Incarnation of the Word of God, whose name is above every Name, to give testimony to the Truth. To Him we can listen with security, for Himself He is the truth—He is God.

I have come to the end of the task I set myself.

Summing up.

Starting with a *tabula rasa,* I showed how we could verify and place beyond doubt our own existence and the reality of the world around us. From our own life we rise to the Life of God.

The Contingent, of necessity, involves the Absolute. Natural reason suffices to prove the Being of a Supreme Creator, who, as our conscience warns us, is the Judge of men.

Our next, and last, step has been to show how strong and varied is the evidence for the Truth of the Christian Revelation—evidence derived from Prophecy and Miracle and Experience and from that wondrous religious Unity which is known as the Catholic Church—the work of Jesus Christ, who lived on earth as the reputed son of Joseph a carpenter, but claimed to be the Son of the Living God, and the Divine Teacher of all mankind.

Many men of commanding intellectual power have held that each of these evidences, considered alone, is enough to establish the Truth of Christianity. How great then must be their force in conjunction with each other.

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[1] John xviii. 37.

Other arguments, such as that drawn from the analogy between nature and grace (as understood by the teachings of Catholicism), for the present at least, I have laid aside.

But there is *one* argument, which is in a category by itself, and can hardly be called an argument, for it transcends all argument—it is derived from the Character of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Character of Christ.

On this theme I dared not permit myself to write. It is enough to say that writers who do not believe in Christianity have again and again acknowledged that the Portrait of our Lord as drawn in the Gospels is that of a perfect Man. In this connection I deemed it of great importance to remind my readers that, unlike other men, who may be considered good, never once did Christ accuse Himself of sin. Nay, He declared Himself to be without sin, and demanded all who heard His Voice, under tremendous penalties, to submit themselves to Him. "It was said by God to them of old time, but *I* say to you"—"a new commandment do *I* give unto you." "If any man deny Me before men, I will deny him before My Father in Heaven." Moreover He has declared that He will judge the world. If then Christ be in truth the most perfect Man the world has known—and this is freely admitted—He is that which He claimed to be, our Lord and our Judge, as well as our Divine Exemplar, who commands us to "learn of" Him.

The choice has to be made by those who will face the facts. Christ must be either rejected or accepted absolutely and without reserve. And for those who have come at last to say to Him with St. Thomas: "My Lord and my God," proofs will soon be no longer *needed*—needed far less than proofs are needed by a devoted wife for her husband's good name, or than elaborate arguments are needed by a friend to build up his belief in the integrity of one whom he has loved for many years. We *know*, and our knowledge transcends the proofs, upon which, perhaps, in the beginning it may have rested. For Faith, we do well often to remind ourselves, emphatically *is* knowledge[1]—knowledge oftentimes far more sure than any which depends upon the mere testimony of the senses. And the knowledge which surpasses all knowledge is the knowledge of Christ and of His Love—knowledge which bears within itself the seeds of our future Life. *This* is Life Eternal to know the True God and Jesus Christ whom God has sent.

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[1] *Cf.* p. 39 *seq.*

IS CATHOLICISM TRUE?

"*Il y a plaisir d'être dans un vaisseau battu de l'orage lorsqu'on est assuré qu'il ne périra point.*"—PASCAL : *Pensées.*

PART II

IS CATHOLICISM TRUE?

CHAPTER XII

THE RULE OF FAITH

JESUS CHRIST came into the world to teach. This He has placed beyond a doubt. The question still remains to be discussed: By what *Medium* does He teach each generation as it passes? How am I at the present day to learn the supernatural truths which He has revealed? How am I to be certain as to what I am rightly to believe?

Christ the Divine Teacher.

Christ's Method of Teaching.

Now, it is undeniable that Christ when He lived upon this earth had only one method of teaching. He taught orally, by word of mouth—and He taught with authority.

Our Lord taught orally. Not once do we read of His teaching by writing. Indeed, so far as we can learn from the records of His life, He wrote only once — the sins of the Pharisees. He then wrote on the sand, and His writing was soon obliterated.

His Teaching oral.

Our Lord "taught with authority, and not as the Scribes," and, though He was meek and humble of heart, never did He brook opposition to His teaching. He suffered indeed patiently, as a lamb led to the slaughter, at the hands of those who treated Him despitefully in His sacred Passion. He was spat upon and mocked and scourged and crowned with the Crown of Thorns, and clothed in the purple robe of derision, and cruelly crucified between two thieves. Nor did one word of reproach fall from His lips. But on the other hand, never did He permit His Apostles to contradict Him in His teaching. His was the Word of God. "I say unto you" was a mode of speech habitual with Him. It was the duty of men to receive His words as little children—otherwise they could not be His disciples.

His Teaching authoritative.

We see then that not only did Christ teach orally, but also that He demanded submission of the intellect from those who listened to His voice.

But Christ no longer teaches us in His own Person. We can no longer hear His living voice. And thus the question arises—a question of the very highest importance for those who believe in Christ: How does Christ wish to teach *me* now? What provision has He made for the continuance of His teaching, so that men may still be taught by Him, though His visible Presence be withdrawn?

Presumption that the method of Divine Teaching has not changed since the Ascension of Christ.

The presumption is, unquestionably, that, as He taught when He was on earth, in the same manner will He teach now—that His teaching will still be *oral* and *authoritative.* Therefore it will in no way surprise us that for more than fifteen hundred years all Christians believed that Christ had provided for the preservation of His Revelation, intact from error, through the institution of a teaching Church, guided by His Holy Spirit "into all truth"—of a Church whose teaching should be mainly and normally oral, a Church which should teach authoritatively in His Name, and in virtue of His promises.

This consistency secured by institution of the Church.

New Theory of Private Judgement exercised upon the Bible.

In the sixteenth century a theory hitherto unknown in Christendom was for the first time broached. It was asserted by certain innovators that no man was bound to listen to the Teaching Church of Christ, but that it was the right of every man (nay, that it was his duty) to judge for himself as to what He was to believe, by reading and interpreting the Bible according to his own private view of its meaning, through the exercise of what these innovators termed "the sacred right of private judgement."

Contrast between Catholic and Protestant Rule of Faith.

Thus we have, in clear-cut opposition, on the one side the ancient Catholic belief that Christ has left His Church authoritatively to decide religious controversies, and on the other the modern Protestant opinion that Christ has left for this same purpose the Bible as privately interpreted by each individual.

All Catholics believe in the Bible, and I suppose that all Protestants believe (in some sense or other, for here, as elsewhere, they differ amongst themselves) in a Church of Christ. But no Catholic believes that he is to be taught by his private interpretation of the Bible, in contradiction to the official teaching of the Church. He does not believe that the books of the Bible were given for this purpose. And no Protestant (so long as he is true to Protestant principles) will accept the teaching of the Church, when it runs counter to his private interpretation of the Bible.

The Church to teach and the Bible to prove.

It is true that in these latter years a new formula has been discovered, "The Church to teach and the Bible to prove." Some people think that here they have found a half-way house between Catholic and Protestant extremes, but if we examine this formula closely we shall see at once that it comes back to the old Protestant principle, for, if I am to use the Bible to "*prove*" the teaching of the Church, I must, in the end, fall back upon my own private interpretation of the Bible. (Obviously in this context "to *prove*" can only mean to *test*).

After all, then, we have here nothing more than a hesitating nineteenth-twentieth-century variant of the old sixteenth-century trumpet note: "The Bible and the Bible only is the Religion of Protestants." If a man is to "prove" (or test) the Church's teaching before accepting it, his ultimate authority is that by which he "proves," so that if he is to "prove" by his private interpretation—then private interpretation necessarily remains for him where the first Protestants placed it, at the very basis of his belief. It is his Rule of Faith.

The Word of God the Remote Rule of Faith.

The Truths revealed by Christ constitute God's Word to men. In itself, this Word of God—Divine Revelation, whatever it may be—is, in the eyes of all Christians, the ultimate, or (to employ the terminology of Catholic Theology) the *Remote* Rule of Faith. This will be disputed by none.

The Proximate Rule of Faith.

Still, the question remains unanswered: How are we, at the present moment, to discover the contents and nature of this Remote Rule of Faith—which is Divine Revelation? We require to know in what, precisely, Divine Relevation consists. By the Rule of

Faith, therefore, is ordinarily understood not the *Remote*, but the *Proximate* Rule of Faith—that is to say the channel through which the Word of God is communicated to us. Understanding the Rule of Faith in this latter sense, the Catholic Rule is simply: *The Teaching of the Church*, the Protestant Rule is: *The Bible as interpreted by each individual for himself.*

It should be clearly understood, on the one hand, that the Catholic Church claims to teach, as matter of Divine Faith, only those truths which have been revealed by God and consequently rest on His Word, and, on the other hand, that the Protestant Rule of Faith assumes that each individual may count on the assistance of the Holy Spirit in his private interpretation of the Scriptures. It is alleged that a Protestant does not rest his interpretation of the Bible on his own private authority, though he does rest it on his own private judgement, enlightened by God. This, however, is merely a matter of phrasing, since in this case a Protestant rests his interpretation on a private revelation supposed to have been *made to himself*, of the truth of which he has no guarantee whatsoever outside of himself.

Protestants generally take their Rule of Faith for granted.

Catholics in this country hardly realise that their fellow-citizens—at least those amongst them who still continue to believe in Christianity—generally take the Protestant Rule of Faith for granted—

much in the same way that they take for granted the multiplication table. This statement will appear to many persons to be an exaggeration, but I know that it in no way overshoots the mark. Again and again I have asked people who are not Catholics, but who believe in Christ, by what means they think that they are intended by God to find out what are the Truths which Christ has revealed. I have never received any but one answer, always given with the utmost assurance: "By reading the Bible." No other method seems ever to have occurred to them, even though they may, Sunday after Sunday, have placidly recited the words: "I believe the Holy Catholic Church." They have no suspicion that they have been using the Bible for a purpose for which the Bible was never intended, when interpreting its pages in opposition to the Teaching of that Church to which the Bible throughout bears witness. For this reason our work in England has too often to be destructive before it can be constructive. We are forced to pull down before we may hope to build up. Men of good-will have to be shown how unreasonable and hopeless it is for them to imagine that they can find out for themselves from the Bible what Christ has revealed—at least in matters disputed amongst Christians—before they are likely to see how necessary it is for them to be taught by the Church.

Since, then we live in a Protestant country, it is an inevitable portion of our enquiry to examine this Protestant Rule of Faith: "I am to believe what I find for myself in the Bible, nothing more and nothing less. Thus only may I hope to learn what is in accordance with God's Revelation. 'Yes, the Bible, the Bible alone, is the Religion of Protestants.'"[1]

Necessity of examining the Protestant Rule of Faith.

It will hardly be disputed by any one that, whatever medium is asserted to have been left by Christ, whereby Christians may be able to learn the Truths which He has revealed, it must, if it is to be accepted as such by reasonable men, comply with the following conditions :—

(*a*) IT MUST BE THE SAME IN EVERY AGE. It would be a gratuitous assumption to assert that Christians were required by Christ to learn what they were to believe in one manner in the first century, and in quite another manner in the twentieth.

Marks of the true Rule of Faith.

(*b*) IT MUST BE ADAPTED TO ITS PURPOSE. To think otherwise would be to deny the Wisdom of God.

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[1] *Cf.* Chillingworth's famous work *The Religion of Protestants a sure road to Salvation* (vi. 56). "In order to know the Religion of Protestants neither the doctrine of Luther, nor that of Calvin, or Melancthon is to be taken, nor the confession of Augsburg or Geneva, nor the Articles of the Anglican Church, nor even the harmony of all the Protestant Confessions, but that which they all subscribe to as the Perfect Rule of their Faith and actions, that is to say, the Bible. Yes, the Bible, the Bible alone, is the Religion of Protestants."

(*c*) IT MUST HAVE CREDENTIALS. In other words it must *prove* that it is what it claims to be. Something is needed in this matter beyond bare assertion.

Protestant Rule of Faith not that of the Church in the beginning.

(*a*) Now directly we consider the matter, we shall see that the Protestant Rule of Faith is not the same Rule as that which was in existence in the early ages of Christianity. The first Christians most certainly did not find out for themselves by the private interpretation of the Bible what they were to believe, for the New Testament was not yet in existence. (No one will maintain that the Religion revealed by Christ is to be discovered in the Old Testament, which, before His coming, foreshadowed Christianity.)

As we learn from the Acts of the Apostles, the oral and authoritative method of teaching employed by Christ was continued after His Ascension, and we read that the first Christians were taught orally and authoritatively by the Church. For example, we are told that, when a controversy arose in very early days indeed, St. Peter and the other Apostles settled it, not by reference to any books, but by the words " It hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us."[1] This is the Catholic method, not the Protestant. It is the method of authority. When employed by the Catholic Church to-day, her enemies are accustomed to characterise it as

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[1] Acts xv. 28.

"arrogant in the extreme," or "arrogant beyond measure." There can be no arrogance if the Church has authority and commission from God thus to speak—if it is her duty thus to speak.

A Protestant may possibly imagine that when the actual contemporaries of our Lord, who had listened to His Words, had passed away, oral teaching was superseded by the Bible as a Rule of Faith. Were this the case, some evidence of so striking a change would be found in the early Christian literature of the sub-apostolic age. Of any such change no trace whatever is to be found.

The New Testament as a whole has been so familiar to us all since our childhood, that sometimes we do not remember how gradually it came into being. Had our Lord intended Christians to learn what they were to believe directly from a book, who can doubt that He would have ordered such a book to be composed? There is no record of His having done anything of the sort. Many belonging to the first generation of Christians had already passed away before a line of the New Testament was written. Two generations, full of faith, had left this world before the New Testament was completed.

The Epistle of Clement.

St. Clement, Bishop of Rome, sent his Epistle to the Corinthians before the Gospel of St. John had been given to the Church. Yet no one who has read that Roman Epistle will have failed to recognise its note of authority and of certainty. There is no more suggestion that those to whom it was addressed were free to "prove" its commands and teaching by appeal to any other writings (however sacred), than can be found in a doctrinal letter of the Pope to-day. And, indeed, Christians in Rome and Corinth could not have appealed to the Sacred Scriptures as a final authority on all religious subjects at a time when the fourth Gospel was not in existence.

Questions as to the Canon of Scripture.

Again, even after the last book of Holy Scripture had been written, it was by no means certain amongst Christians which, amongst the various religious writings then in existence, were Holy Scripture and which were not. This question was only decided by the authority of the Catholic Church under Damasus Bishop of Rome.[1] Apart from this authority, it is impossible for any man to settle the Canon of Scripture with any finality or certainty. Apart from this authority, there is no reason to maintain that the Epistle of Jude, for example, *is* inspired and that the Epistle of Barnabas is *not*. It reaches the height of unreason first to accept Holy Scripture and forthwith to reject the authority on which Holy Scripture rests. Luther seems to have felt this, when he ascribed various degrees of value to various books of the New Testament, in proportion to the degree in which he thought that they supported his peculiar opinions on justification, going so far as to repudiate the Epistle of James altogether as an "Epistle of straw." We find here private judgement exercising itself (quite consistently, if the principle be once admitted) not only on the meaning of the Bible, but also on the preliminary question of what the Bible is.

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[1] *Cf.* p. 264.

It is, then, quite evident that for the first four centuries (that is, until the Church first taught which Books constituted the Bible) the Protestant Rule of Faith—the private interpretation of the Bible—was impossible—and that even after it has been settled for Catholics what is the Bible, many difficult questions as to the canonicity of various books remain to be settled by Protestants before they are free to apply their private interpretation to the contents of the Books which, in the exercise of their private judgement, they may select.

Difficulty of general access to the Bible before the Discovery of Printing.

Moreover, even after the various Books of the New Testament had all been written and their inspiration had been recognised by the Church, for many centuries the comparative rarity and cost of their manuscripts rendered it impossible that they should be widely distributed amongst the Faithful.[1] At least before the invention of printing, no way was open by which the great mass of men could learn the truths of Christianity, excepting, through oral teaching, from the Church. I say, *at least before the invention of printing*, for even now, when close on five centuries have passed since Caxton set up his printing press, great numbers of Christ's disciples all over the world are still unable to decipher printed characters. Not many years ago I was told in an English post office, that about one third of the applicants for Old Age Pensions can neither read nor write. How are these poor and aged folk to apply the Protestant Rule of Faith, and exercise that sacred right of Private Judgement which, as we are so often assured, is "inalienably" theirs?

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[1] There is no doubt, however, that, especially in the fourth and fifth centuries, the educated laity sought eagerly after

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these handwritten copies of portions of the Holy Scriptures and regarded them as amongst their greatest treasures. To "betray" them in time of persecution to the enemies of the Faith, was considered one of the most terrible crimes. In this connection we may note that Professor Harnack writes (*Bible Reading in the Early Church*, Eng. Trans., p. 97): "Optatus (VII.) speaks thus of the complete Bible. . . . 'Manus omnium codicibus plenæ sunt.'" But it is certain that, as Harnack has himself pointed out in the same book (p. 82), these *codices* were not 'the complete Bible.' For the most part, at least, they were separate Books. Moreover, it is held by the best critical authorities that the passage quoted by Harnack as from Optatus is in fact the work of a forger, who was anxious for his own purpose to minimise the effects of the betrayal of Sacred Books during the persecution under Domitian (*Cf. Optatus of Milevis Translated into English* (Longmans), pp. 272, 305). In any case, the words *Manus omnium plenæ sunt* are manifestly a rhetorical exaggeration, and as such should not be pressed unduly.

It is, then, plain, that the theory which calls upon each individual Christian to discover for himself the Teaching of Christ, by his private study and interpretation of the Bible, far from having been employed in every age, was absolutely impossible for four hundred years (until the Canon of Scripture was fixed), was unheard of in Christendom for more than fifteen hundred years (until the discovery of printing), and is impracticable even to-day, excepting for those men and women who are more or less educated (able to read) and more or less leisured (with time to read). For the poor—for those very poor whom one may see crowding Catholic Churches all over the world—its exercise is clearly out of the question. Yet we read that it was especially to the Poor that the Gospel of Christ was to be *preached*.[1]

Catholic Rule of Faith that of the Church in the beginning and in every age.

On the other hand we find the Catholic principle that we are to be taught by the Church "in possession"—with prescription from the beginning, and full of vigour at the present day. We find too that this principle is wonderfully adapted to the needs of all men in every age, to the needs of the lowly and simple, who still "gladly receive"[2] the Word of God, and to the highest needs of those who are "wise in their own conceits,"[3] but who—so at least we are warned by the Founder of Christianity, unless they "become as little children"—that is to say, (amongst other things) unless *they are ready to be taught*—shall never enter His Kingdom.[1]

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[1] Luke iv. 18. [2] Acts ii. 41. [3] Rom. xi. 25; xii. 16.

Now this last consideration is of the greatest possible importance—for

The True Rule of Faith is adapted to its end.

(*b*) The Rule of Faith given by our Lord must not only be the same in every age of Christianity, it must also be *adapted to the purpose for which He gave it,* since in His Divine Wisdom God always proportions means to their ends. In this case the *end* is to enable Christians to know *simply, easily and with certainty* the truths which Christ revealed. The means provided must therefore enable us to know *simply and easily*, since it is to be used by the poor and the uneducated as well as by the learned; it must also enable us to know *with certainty*, otherwise we should have no security in our Faith, and should be liable to be "tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine"[2]—we should be in the condition of those of whom the Apostle wrote that they were "ever learning and never coming to the *knowledge* of the Truth"[3] (knowledge involves certainty), and should be without *stability* in our religion.[4]

Now it would seem to be impossible to maintain that the Protestant Rule of Faith is simple and easy or that it provides certainty—in the teeth (1) of the express statement in the Bible itself to the contrary, and (2) of experience.

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[1] Matt. xviii. 3.

[2] Eph. iv. 14.

[3] 2 Tim. iii. 7.

[4] *Cf.* 2 Pet. ii. 14; iii. 16.

Not so the Protestant Rule.

(1) It cannot be said that the Scriptures are all easily to be understood, when in these Scriptures themselves we read that they "contain things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest to their own destruction."[1] It may here be pointed out that though a man may well be condemned for self-sufficiency in refusing to recognise his limitations, God will neither blame nor "destroy" any man for mere want of "learning," or for mere mistakes in interpreting that which is "hard to be understood." It follows that the "destruction" which we are told is to be the lot of those who wrest the Scriptures is the consequence of their being "unstable." But *stability* presupposes something to which we have to be fixed or (to change the metaphor) moored. In this case, evidently, some Rule anterior to the reading of the Scriptures themselves is assumed to be of supreme authority. This Rule can only be the oral teaching of the Church. No other has even been suggested.

The Scriptures contain things hard to be understood. Testimony to this of St. Peter

(2) *Experience* has amply borne out St. Peter's warning concerning the difficulties

And of experience.

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[1] 2 Pet. iii. 16.

in the interpretation of the Holy Scriptures. The first example of this we may find once more in these Scriptures themselves.

St. Philip the Deacon and the Ethiopian.

We read in the Acts of the Apostles that when Philip the Deacon found an Ethiopian, "a man of great authority under Queen Candace, sitting in his chariot and reading Isaiah the Prophet, he said to him: "Thinkest thou that thou understandest what thou readest?" And he answered: "How can I, unless some man show me?" Then St. Philip, we are told, "opened his mouth," and proceeded to "*preach* unto him Jesus"—to *explain* and to *teach*.[1]

Variations of Protestants in their interpretations of the Scriptures.

But if the Old Testament requires an interpreter of its meaning, this is certainly no less the case with regard to the New. Should proof be asked for this statement, it may be found in the notorious fact that no sooner had the Protestant Rule of Faith been established by the Reformers, than we find these same Reformers violently quarrelling amongst themselves as to the true meaning of passage after passage in the Sacred Text. We may observe the same phenomenon in our own country at the present day. Men thoroughly competent in other branches of scholarship prove themselves incompetent in the business of interpreting the Scriptures, for they cannot agree for a moment amongst themselves as to their interpretation. And this not merely where the grammatical construction may be difficult, but also with reference to such short sentences as "This is My Body," or "Whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven them."

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[1] Acts viii. 26-31.

And this even with regard to the most Fundamental Truths.

Nor is it possible to escape from this difficulty by alleging that there is agreement about "Fundamentals," for in the first place there is nothing in the Bible itself about agreement being necessary in "Fundamentals" only—on the contrary our Lord demands Faith in all whatsoever that He has revealed,[1] and in the second place, no such agreement can in fact be attained by the method of private interpretation, even with regard to the most Fundamental doctrines. For example, Arians had much to say with regard to the texts quoted by Catholics to prove the Consubstantiality of the Son, and it is difficult to prove from the Bible alone the Personality and Divinity of the Holy Spirit, and exceedingly hard to prove the efficacy of Infant Baptism, or to justify the substitution of the Christian Sunday for the Jewish Sabbath. These truths and practices can only be proved and justified by the authority of the Living Church. Yet, happily, all Protestants to-day (excepting the Unitarians) accept the Doctrine of the Consubstantiality of the Son, and the

[1] Matt. xxviii. 20.

Godhead of the Holy Ghost, and also (excepting the Baptists) baptise their children, and all (excepting the Seventh-day Adventists) keep the Lord's Day not on Saturday, but on Sunday. How can these things be justified by Protestants, if the private interpretation of Scripture is their sole Rule of Faith, and if "the Bible and the Bible only" is their "religion"?

The prohibition to eat things strangled.

Moreover, how on Protestant principles is it possible to justify "the eating of things strangled" or with blood still in them, so plainly forbidden—and apparently forbidden for all time—not only in Leviticus but also in the New Testament?[1] No private interpretation can suffice to satisfy us that this prohibition was temporary in its character. Here we depend absolutely on the practice of the Church, which, in its turn, depends upon the authority of the Church to change merely disciplinary regulations (even though they be of Apostolic origin), in accordance with the needs of changing times and circumstances.

The Washing of the Feet.

Similarly, with regard to the Washing of the Feet apparently commanded by our Lord,[2] it is impossible to prove by private interpretation that this Rite is not a Sacrament.

Let me on this point quote at some little length from the late Fr. Bridgett's most excellent, but I fear little known, book *The Ritual of the New Testament:*

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[1] Acts xv. 20, 29.

[2] John xiii. 8-15.

> "It is not my wish to suggest a new heresy to any lover of novelties, yet I will state my own conviction that a perfectly impartial, unprejudiced reader, confining himself strictly to the New Testament, would select the "Washing of the Feet" as one of the principal rites or Sacraments of Christian observance, and that he would probably rank it with Baptism and Communion. . . . St. John records the history of the washing of feet in the most circumstantial detail. It is performed in a very striking and emphatic manner by Jesus Christ, on the very eve of His death. He seems to make it essential to fellowship with Himself. "If I wash thee not, thou shalt have no part with Me." He seems to impose a formal precept of its repetition. "You ought to wash one another's feet, for I have given you an example, that as I have done to you, so you do also." He seems to insinuate some mysterious meaning or virtue in it beyond what lies on the surface: "What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." Anyone considering these things with a mind unprepossessed, and with no further knowledge of the subject, would assuredly assign to this rite an important place, if not the very first place, among the observances of Christianity.
>
> "It is evident, at least, that not from Scripture alone did Protestants derive their neglect of the ceremony so impressively performed by our Blessed Lord. No passage of Scripture is alleged to prove that His apparent precept imposes no real obligation.

This is decided on conjecture alone. Washing of the feet, it is said, was an oriental custom, a token of hospitality and kindness in our Lord's time and country. Therefore His action must be considered merely as an oriental mode of teaching a lesson of charity and humility. The lesson must be always taught, but not in the same symbolic form. But surely there is great rashness in such processes of reasoning. Could not our Lord have adopted a natural or oriental rite, and have elevated it to a supernatural dignity, and made it of universal obligation? Was not a supper on bread and wine a natural repast before our Lord's institution of Holy Communion? Was not Baptism an oriental usage when it was adopted and raised to new meaning and dignity, and promulgated for all nations, by Jesus Christ? Those, then, must have a great reliance on the certainty of their own reasoning, who, with no other foundation than conjecture, persuade themselves that our Lord's command entails no literal obedience on themselves. Can it be that they are emboldened to take this view from observing that the Catholic Church has never counted the washing of feet among the list of grace-conferring Sacraments? This is indeed the case; but then Catholics do not support their view by appeal to Scripture only. The words that our Blessed Lord spoke to St. Peter after washing his feet—'What I do,' thou knowest not now; *but thou shalt know hereafter*—point to a subsequent and supplemental information which was to be the key to what is recorded by St. John. We believe that that key was given to St. Peter and the Apostles, and by them traditionally given to the Churches which they founded, and by it we know that the washing of feet, though an important rite for all ages, is not an eighth Sacrament."[1]

Mr. Lloyd George's great Budget.

No written document can possibly interpret itself. Of this truth we have had a striking example in our recent political history. During the summer of 1906 Mr. Lloyd George's Budget was discussed in the House of Commons for many months with much fulness and extreme acrimony. It became one of the main issues at a hotly contested General Election, and finally passed into law. That same year the Courts of the Realm decided that, in a matter of considerable importance, the Government had misunderstood the wording of their own measure, and that a certain impost made under that measure was illegal because contrary to its true meaning. But, if an Act of Parliament passed in England with the greatest deliberation in the twentieth century needs an authentic interpreter, how much more do not difficult books written nearly 1,800 years ago in Greek and Hebrew stand in need of authoritative explanations of their meaning ?

No man can without presumption ascribe his own interpretation to the Holy Spirit of God.

Nor is it possible to urge with any effect that the Holy Spirit of God will enable the believer rightly to interpret the Sacred Writings for himself, since in that case all believers would interpret them in the same sense. As we have seen, the very opposite is the case.

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[1] *The Ritual of the New Testament*, pp. 223, 224.

If once we surrender the authority of the Church, how, for example, can we Catholics be certain that we are aided by the Spirit of God when we interpret the passages concerning Baptism in the Catholic sense, and that the Baptists are not aided by the Holy Spirit, when they interpret those same passages in a manner precisely opposite? Or, how can the Baptists be certain that they are right, and that Catholics are wrong? No man dare, without incredible presumption, claim the aid of the Holy Spirit for his own private conclusion against that of his neighbour. But it is not an act of pride to believe that the Holy Spirit was promised to the Church; there is no self-presumption in submitting to her public and official decisions.

"The Gospel," remarks St. Jerome, "consists not in the words, but in the sense; a wrong explanation turns the Word of God into the word of man."[1]

Necessity of a living interpreter of the Bible.

This is undeniable. But to be sure that we have the Word of God, and not the word of man, we need a living interpreter. "When," writes St. Augustine, "you think that you have been sufficiently tossed about and wish to see an end to your anxieties, follow the Rule of Catholic Discipline, which has come down to us through the Apostles from Christ Himself, and which shall descend from us to the latest posterity."[2]

[1] *In Epist. ad Galat.*

[2] *De Utilit. Cred.*, viii.

This "Rule of Catholic Discipline" is the Catholic Rule of Faith, which is perfectly adapted to the end for which it has been given. The longer I live the more clearly do I see how hopeless it must always be for me (or for anyone) to succeed in puzzling out by private study the true meaning of Scripture, amidst a multitude of conflicting interpretations—a very Babel of voices—and to be sure that I am right, and that others with whom I happen to disagree are wrong—(for if one interprets privately one must disagree with someone), and the longer I live the more manifest is it to my mind that, since God wills that men should believe His Revelation, He has provided a simple way of knowing with certainty what precisely that Revelation is. Thus and thus only, can we exercise the Faith, which reposes on the Word of God, and therefore shuts out wilful doubt. Thus and thus only can be fulfilled the ancient prophecy that "there shall be a straight way so that fools may find it, and that the wayfaring man may not stumble."[1]

Extreme difficulty of the Protestant Rule of Faith.

The Protestant Rule of Faith requires much learning, and (if there is to be any consistency) even the knowledge of ancient languages, for how else can the reader of the Bible in a translation be sure that the translation he is using is correct ? In other words it involves the use of *apparatus* and equipment.

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[1] Isa. xxxv. 8.

The Catholic way requires none of these things as necessary. Even "the fool," the man of little intelligence, and "the wayfaring man" with no books in his wallet—if he be but humble and obedient, may find it and walk therein securely with great joy and much contentment.

Protestant mistranslations.

It is well known that at the time of the Reformation Catholics loudly complained that the first Protestant translations of the Bible were full of gross mistranslations of the Sacred Text, made to support the new religion.[1] It is perhaps not so well known as it should be that at the present day it is generally acknowledged by scholars that such complaints were justified. These mistranslations were almost all removed from the Authorised Version of King James, though one glaring one remained to be removed by the Revised Version of Queen Victoria.[2] It is of course clear that private interpretation exercised upon a mistranslation of the Bible is not exercised upon the Bible at all.

It will be generally admitted that a modern stevedore is hardly competent to interpret St. Paul's epistles for himself. Yet I believe that a stevedore, were he to attempt such interpretation would be in the main more likely to be right—because more likely to be in sympathy with the mind of the great Apostle—than a modern German professor. However this may be, both stevedore and Professor may be sure that they are right, if when the Church has spoken they accept her interpretation with submission of the intellect, for, since the Church is, as St. Paul himself assures us, "The Pillar and the Ground of the Truth"[1] to the Church it belongs to interpret the hard sayings of God.

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[1] *Cf.* Ward's *Errata.*

[2] 1 Cor. xii. 27.

The True Rule of Faith has credentials.

(*c*) Moreover, not only is it necessary that the true Rule of Faith for Christians be the *same in every age of Christianity*, and *be adapted to its purpose, it must also have credentials*—that is to say, it must be able to show some reason for itself, beyond the bare, unsupported statement of its advocates.

The Protestant Rule has none.

If any man comes to me and says: "You should interpret the Bible for yourself," I am clearly justified in answering: "Why?"

We are told: "Nothing is to be believed as of Faith unless it can be proved from the Bible."[2] This is a clear-cut proposition. More, it is a definite dogma. How, then, can this dogma, itself, be proved from the Bible? To this obvious question no reply can be given. There is not one word in the Bible itself to suggest anything of the sort. On the contrary, in the Bible we read: "No prophecy is of private interpretation."[3]

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[1] 1 Tim. iii. 15.

[2] *The Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion*—Article VI.

[3] 2 Pet. i. 20.

The Pharisees and the Beroeans.

Sometimes, in mitigation of this striking fact, appeal is made to two places in the New Testament; the first, in which Christ may have exhorted the Pharisees to "search the Scriptures";[1] the second, in which the Jews of Beroea are praised as being "more noble than those of Thessalonica, because they daily searched the Scriptures."[2] But directly we examine these passages in their context we see that in both cases the reference is not to the Scriptures of the New Testament but to the Scriptures of the Old Law. Moreover, neither the Pharisees nor the Beroeans were enjoined to search the Scriptures to find out whether the Teaching of Christ, or the Teaching of the Church, was in conformity with what the Scriptures contained. The exact opposite is in fact the case. The Pharisees were blamed because, though "*thinking* in the Scriptures to have life everlasting," they did not recognise the claims of Him to whom those Scriptures "gave testimony," and the Beroeans were praised because, unlike the men of Thessalonica, they "received the Word," which was preached to them *orally*, "with eagerness" and searched the Scriptures, neither to criticise that Word, nor to compare it with the Bible for themselves, but to find out "whether these things were so." The "things" concerning which they searched "whether they were so" were the statements that "the Christ was to suffer, and to rise again from the dead" and that the Lord Jesus whom Paul "*preached*" was the Christ of Jewish prophecy.[1] They searched the Scriptures for the purpose of finding a living authority to whom they might submit their minds and hearts.

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[1] John v. 39. The Greek original ἐρευνᾶτε very possibly is not an exhortation (the imperative) at all, but an affirmation (the indicative)—not "search" but "you search." In the Revised Version "you search" is placed in the text, with "search" only in the margin. St. Cyril thinks that it is indicative, St. John Chrysostom that it is imperative. In either case the words of Christ carry with them a reproach.

[2] Acts xvii. 10, 11.

Now this is precisely the Catholic method in dealing with those Christians who, happily, believe in the New Testament, though, unhappily, they are not Catholics, as the Jews, happily, believed in the Old Testament, though, unhappily, they did not believe in Christ. To such Christians the Church says to-day, just as our Lord once said to the Jews, "Search the Scriptures" [or, perhaps: "You search the Scriptures"], "for in them *you think* to have eternal life, and the same are they which give testimony of Me."[2] The Old Testament gives testimony to Christ, the New Testament gives testimony to His Church.

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[1] Acts xvii. 3.

[2] In the large edition of Cruden's *Concordance* this passage is quoted under the word *eternal,* but the governing verb *you think* is omitted, and "you have" is substituted for "you think to have."

St. Paul and Moses.

St. Paul tells us that "even until this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon the heart of the Jews."[1] I trust that I shall not be wanting in charity if I write that it seems to me that "even until this day," when the Gospels and when Paul himself are read, a veil is over the eyes of Protestants.

Those men are far "more noble" who, like the men of Beroea, having searched "the Scriptures to see whether these things be so," submit to Christ and to the Church of Christ whose authority they have recognised, through that which they have read therein, than are others who, like the men of Thessalonica, take no trouble to read anything, but are content to shrug their shoulders with indifference, or with unreasoning hostility.

Credentials of the Catholic Rule of Faith.

Whilst, then, no support can be obtained from the New Testament for the theory that Christians should discover what Christ has revealed, by searching its passages for themselves, the New Testament clearly points out the fact that Christians are to be taught orally by the Church. Our Lord sent His Apostles not primarily to write but to teach, and declared solemnly that against His Church the Gates of Hell should not prevail. He warned us that if we would not "hear His Church" we were to be "as the heathen and the publican."[1] He promised the assistance of His Spirit to guide His Church into "all Truth."[1] And so, as we have seen, the Apostles relying on such promises as these, taught with authority, claiming assent to their teaching from those who believed in Christ, without any appeal being allowed to any written documents whatsoever.

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[1] 2 Cor. iii. 15.

I am *not* here arguing in a circle, first proving the Bible from the Church, and then the Church from the Bible. I *am* appealing to the Bible, when I am writing for Christians who already accept the Bible, just as our Lord and St. Paul appealed to the Old Testament, when they were dealing with Pharisees and Jews of Beroea—all of whom accepted the Old Testament. Moreover, those who are not Christians will hardly refuse to accept the historical authority of the Gospels as documents proving the manner in which Christ intended that His Religion should be propagated.

Faith cometh by hearing.

St. Paul assures us that "Faith cometh" not by reading, but "by hearing." Here is the essential difference between the Protestant and the Catholic Rule of Faith. "Faith," says the Protestant controversialist, "cometh by reading—by reading the Bible." "No," replies the Catholic, "Faith cometh by hearing." And so wrote the Apostle in the beginning: "Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of Christ."[2]

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[1] Matt. xviii. 17.

[2] Rom. x. 17.

Nowhere in the Bible is the expression "Word of Christ" or "Word of God" used for its own pages.

The Word of Christ.

The Word of God is the Revelation of God to mankind in Christ, who is Himself the Personal Word of God.

God's Revelation is the *Absolute* Rule of Faith, and this Revelation comes to us, "by hearing," through the Church of God. "Faith cometh by hearing, but how shall they hear without a preacher?"[1] Such a preacher of the Word of Christ Christians have had from the beginning, and will have to the end, in His Church. "And how shall they preach unless they be sent?"[2] Christ sent His Church with the great words: "Go make disciples of all nations, and I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world."[3] The Church of Christ can never become "corrupt," or teach falsehood in the place of truth, for the Gates of Hell shall not prevail, nor shall His Presence fail her.

To sum up the conclusions at which we have arrived on this subject of supreme importance. It is, surely, abundantly clear that the Protestant Rule of Faith (*a*) was impossible of application until the Scriptures had been written, and the Canon of Scripture fixed, and printing discovered, that (*b*) in

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[1] Rom. x. 14.

[2] Rom. x. 15.

[3] Matt. xxviii. 19. The Cambridge Bible for Schools (*St. Matthew's Gospel*, p. 230) says that the word teach is a "mistranslation" of the Greek word *μαθητεύσατε*, which should be translated *make disciples of* as in R.V.

The conclusion of the matter.

practice it is obscure, and has always led to endless disputes which it is powerless to settle, and that (*c*) it can derive no sanction from the authority to which it appeals—Holy Scripture itself; whilst the Catholic Rule of Faith alone complies with those conditions which we have seen to be essential, for it (*a*) alone is unchangeable, having alone been *the same in every age;* it (*b*) alone is *adapted to its purpose*, for it alone is clear and suited to the needs of all, whether educated or uneducated, it (*c*) alone *possesses divine Credentials*, for it alone is armed with God's authority and dependent upon the Promises of Christ. The true Rule of Faith is the authoritative teaching of the Church of Christ. By this Rule alone is it possible to know, with certainty, the full Revelation of God.

CHAPTER XIII

THE WORD OF GOD

So far the course of our investigation has shown us our need of an authorised living teacher or Church to promulgate and explain what the Holy Scriptures sometimes term the Gospel, sometimes the Faith, sometimes the Word of Christ, sometimes the Word of God.

Two questions remain to be discussed. What precisely is the Word of God? Where is the Church of Christ to be found?

In this chapter, and in our next, we shall be concerned with the first of these questions.

The Word of God.

The Word of God is, as all Christians are agreed, God's Revelation — a Mystery received by Faith on God's authority. On this subject let us hear St. Paul: "We adulterate not," he wrote to the Corinthians, "the Word of God, but with sincerity, as from God, before God, in Christ we speak."[1] And, again, to the Thessalonians: "We were approved by God that the Gospel should be committed to us. . . . We preached amongst you the Gospel of God. . . . We also give thanks to God without ceasing that when you had received of us the Word of God which we taught you[1] you received it not as the word of men, but (as it is indeed) the Word of God."[2] Similarly, he tells the Romans that he had received his apostolate "to bring about the *obedience* of Faith,"[3] and again he thanks God that they had "*obeyed* from the heart that form of doctrine which had been delivered to them."[4] Once more, to the Colossians he writes "that they had been made firm in the Faith, as they had been taught it."[5]

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[1] Cor. ii. 17.

And as St. Paul had received his apostolate to teach not the word of men, but the Word of God, so it is with the Church to-day, and so has it been in every age. She receives no new Revelation. She has no authority to teach human learning. Her function is to teach the Gospel of Christ which has been committed to her keeping by her Lord.

Now, the question arises what external means (if any) does the Church possess—apart from the hidden supernatural assistance of the Holy Spirit—to the end that she may recognise God's Revelation and be able to discern and separate the word of men with certainty from the Word of God?

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[1] Literally "the Word of hearing from us of God."

[2] 1 Thess. ii. 4, 9, 13.

[3] Rom. i. 5.

[4] Rom. vi. 17

[5] Col. ii. 7.

The Deposit of the Faith.

The Tradition.

It may help us to answer this question if we remember that we find in the New Testament two phrases which are synonymous with the Word of God. The first of these is the Greek expression ἥ παραθήκη τῆς πιστέως which is translated in the Vulgate *Depositum Fidei*, and in English, *The Deposit of the Faith*, and the second ἥ παράδοσις or sometimes in the plural αἵ παραδόσεις, the things which have been handed down. (*Res Traditæ.*)

The Word of God is a treasure which has been deposited with the Church. It was to be carefully transmitted from generation to generation. This was well understood in the Church from the beginning. For example, we find St. Clement, Bishop of Rome, writing as follows to the Corinthians: "Let us conform to the glorious and holy Rule (or Canon) of our Tradition" (*τὸν τῆς παραδόσεως ἡμῶν κάνονα*).[1] In using these words—before, as we do well to remember, the Canon of Scripture was completed—St. Clement was but echoing those of St. Paul who had written to these same Corinthians both of the measure of the Rule (or Canon)[2] and of the Traditions. "Hold the Traditions (*τὰς παραδόσεις*) as I have delivered them to you."[3]

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[1] *Ep. Clem.*, viii. 2.

[2] 2 Cor. x. 13. St. Paul employs the word κανών again in Gal. vi. 16.

[3] 1 Cor. xi. 2.

The Word of God written and oral.

And to the Thessalonians: "Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the Traditions which you have learned, *whether by word or by our epistle*."[1] These Traditions were none other than the Word of God (St. Paul would not either himself "hand down," or call upon his disciple to "stand fast ' in, merely human teaching). We see then that, according to the teaching of St. Paul, the Word of God (the Deposit of the Faith) was to be handed down from two great sources—firstly, the oral teaching of the Apostles (that which they taught "by word"), and, secondly, that which they committed to writing ("by our epistle") in the Sacred Scriptures of the New Testament.

Function of the Church.

Thus St. John Chrysostom, commenting on these words ("whether by word or by our epistle"), writes as follows: "They [the Thessalonians] did not learn all things by letter, but many things also without writing; nevertheless both the one and the other are equally worthy of belief (*ἀξιόπιστα*); so then we also should consider the Tradition of the Church worthy of belief (*ἀξιόπιστον*). It is a Tradition, inquire no further."[2] A Tradition—yes, but "a Tradition of the Church," not a tradition of man. It belongs to the Church not only to sift and separate false Scriptures from true—a task accomplished when the Canon of

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[1] 2 Thess. ii. 14.

[2] Hom. iv. on 2 Thess.

Scripture was fixed—but also to sift and separate heretical oral traditions, "the traditions of men"[1] from her own Tradition—from those sacred doctrines, handed down by the Holy Apostles, which are truly divine in their origin, coming from God. To hand down the true and to reject the false traditions will be part of the allotted task of the Church of God to the end of time.

Divine Tradition.

Holy Scripture.

As we have just seen, St. Paul divides "the [divine] Traditions" into those which were only spoken, and those which were written. However, for the sake of greater clearness, another division has long been in vogue. We do not now speak of Holy Scripture as part of "the Traditions" (though of course Holy Scripture has been *handed down*). By Divine Tradition we now mean those truths of Revelation which are not to be found (at least expressly) written in the Holy Scriptures. Using the word *Tradition* in this last sense, (*a*) Divine Tradition, and (*b*) Holy Scripture, are the twin sources of the Church's teaching.

We must say something about each of these, and will begin with Divine Tradition.

(I.) We say *Divine* Tradition, to distinguish it not only from false (heretical) traditions, but also from any tradition which is purely ecclesiastical and consequently liable to change. For, laws and customs which the Church has instituted, these (however venerable they may be) the Church can modify, change, or abrogate in accordance with the needs of various times and places. Such ecclesiastical traditions (some of them very possibly coming from the Apostles themselves) concern, for instance, the observance of Lent, or the Fast before Communion. But a Divine Tradition, concerning some Truth of Faith, or some Moral Principle, the Church can by no means change. Such a Tradition did not emanate from the Apostles as from its source. They received it either from Christ before His Ascension or from His Holy Spirit after the Day of Pentecost, and entrusted it as a sacred Deposit to the keeping of the Church. The function of the Church with regard to that which she has received from the Apostles is limited to handing it on in every age intact and uncorrupt. I shall always henceforth use the word *Tradition* in this sense—of the Divine Tradition.

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[1] Col. ii. 8 : *ἡ παράδοσις τῶν ἀνθρώπων* ; *cf.* Matt. xv. 9, *ἐντάλματα ἀνθρώπων.*

Divine and Ecclesiastical Traditions.

It is quite clear that in the beginning the Church depended for her teaching exclusively upon Tradition communicated orally, since for many years there were no Christian writings in existence, and when gradually the New Testament came, neither any one of its books severally nor those books as a whole were

Tradition in the Apostolic Age.

intended to give a systematic account of the Christian Doctrine. That Doctrine had been already communicated in the ordinary manner by word of mouth.

Function of Tradition in interpreting the Holy Scriptures.

Still, it is the case that in the Providence of God most of the truths contained in Divine Revelation are witnessed to, at least, indirectly in one or other of the Sacred Writings. Consequently, at the present day perhaps we feel the need of Tradition principally, when there is a question either of determining authoritatively the meaning of the actual words of Scripture or of bringing out the inner significance of words whose verbal meaning is clear. An example of the former necessity may be found in the Divine Words: "This is My Body." Here it is essential to be able to discern with certainty the meaning of the Sacred Words themselves; but this would be impossible without a Divine Tradition existing in the Church capable of assuring us with certainty as to their true meaning. An example of the second use of Tradition, in the interpretation of Scripture, is to be found in the teaching of the Church that the words of St. James, "Is any man sick amongst you,"[1] etc., refer to the Sacrament of the Last Anointing, not to a *charisma* that was intended to be temporary and has passed away.

Moreover, there are some revealed Truths which are either not taught at all in the Holy Scriptures, or are taught only obscurely. An example of the former is the Perpetual Virginity of our Blessed Lady. An example of the second is the Personality of the Holy Ghost. Yet both these truths have certainly been revealed by God, and both have been believed most firmly in the Church from the beginning. We have received them by Divine Tradition.

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[1] Jas. v. 14.

This then we understand by Divine Tradition—any part of God's Revelation, whether it concern the correct interpretation of the Sacred Scriptures, or some Truth to which there is no reference, or only obscure reference, in Holy Writ.

Objection against Tradition.

It has often been pointed out by persons who reject the authority of Tradition in religion that, whereas anything which has once been written remains the same—its characters do not change with the lapse of time—it is notorious that a message which passes from lip to lip will often change its meaning as it passes. For this reason, so it is argued, no one would trust an important message to oral delivery if he were in a position to commit it to writing. The reply is simple. It is not a question of what God might be expected to do, but of what He has actually done. It can be demonstrated that God did not cause His message (as a connected message) to be committed to writing, but that He did guarantee indefectibility to His Church in guarding His Word and handing it down faithfully through the ages. The whole analogy between human ways and divine ways, between the wisdom of man and the wisdom of God, fails when we remember that the very corner-stone of the Catholic Faith is the belief that God protects His Church—His Messenger—from the possibility of error in delivering His Word (as He protected His Prophets who prepared the way for that Word) after a manner in which it would be impossible for any civil state, or earthly institution, to protect its envoys or delegates. A statesman or a man of business quite reasonably and necessarily takes precautions in the conduct of affairs, which are in no way necessary for Almighty God. The Spirit of God employs other methods than those employed by the wisest of men. Moreover, in any case the objection will not hold good. Written documents are notoriously open to misconstruction, even when but little time has elapsed. (We have already referred to this in the case of Mr. Lloyd George's Budget.) The guarantee of the reliability of an oral message is *far* more sure. A business man will often trust a representative in whom he has confidence for a difficult negotiation or to give a clear undertaking in preference to sending a letter. How often do we not say, " Don't write, go and see the man yourself."

It is, therefore, a matter of comparatively little practical consequence that Tradition soon ceased to be purely oral. Without an indefectible interpreter written theological documents must be always useless to after ages as a Rule of Faith.

Writings of the Fathers enshrine Tradition.

The Divine Tradition was enshrined in the writings of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, who are witnesses to its continuity in each succeeding age. For example, I have already observed that the Perpetual Virginity of Mary cannot be proved directly from the Holy Scriptures (certain types in the Old Testament do not suffice to establish a proof without the testimony of Tradition), but the Tradition on which this truth is based has long since ceased to be merely oral. We find it taught unhesitatingly in the writings of Catholic Antiquity. Still, it remains true that a Catholic does not believe that Mary was ever a Virgin because the Fathers of the Church have said so. He believes in our Lady's Virginity, as he believes in every other doctrine of the Faith, because the Church assures him that she has received this truth from God Himself. It is part of God's Revelation and of her Divine Tradition. We believe it on the authority of God, as God's Holy Word.

Necessity of Traditional Teaching in every successive age.

All must admit that from the nature of the case, and the express words of St. Paul, which we have already quoted,[1] Christians were in the beginning required to accept the traditional teaching of the Church, even though it had as yet been nowhere written. If any man holds that this method was at some later period changed by Divine authority, the burden of proof lies upon him. He has to show when and where this change was effected. It is certain that of any such change there is no hint, either in the Holy Scriptures or in Ecclesiastical history, until the great upheaval of the sixteent century. When Protestantism discarded Tradition, the Scriptures were variously interpreted according to the various views of individuals, with no check from that which had been handed down. The inevitable result was chaos.

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[1] *Cf.* p. 252.

The Holy Scriptures.

(II.) Alongside of her Tradition, the Church has received the Holy Scriptures as a great depository of Revelation. Although Catholics know that all revealed truth is not expressly written down in the Holy Scriptures, they know also that, since the Holy Scriptures are inspired by God, whatever they do teach is true.

Meaning of the Canon of Scripture.

It may be well for us to consider briefly the history of the Canon of Holy Scripture. *Canon* is a Greek word which means Rule or Measure. We have already considered its use in this sense by St. Paul and by Pope St. Clement with regard to the Faith. It also means a catalogue. In this sense we find it used by the Fathers of the fourth century for a list of the books which they regarded as complete Scripture. And from the fifth century onward these books were called *Canonical*, because they are part of the Rule (or Canon) of Faith. So, joining these two senses of the word together, by *the Canon of Scripture*, we now mean the list of books which the Church regards as constituting the determinate written element in the Revelation received by the Apostles from our Lord.

Other writings (as those of the great Fathers) may bear their witness to the nature of Revelation: but the Holy Scriptures are the only written documents which Catholics believe to have been inspired by the Holy Spirit and therefore accept (apart from any previous investigation of their contents), as hall-marked by God Himself. The Bible is an essential part of the Deposit committed to the keeping of the Church.

Its History.

It may be well at this point to furnish my readers with a short account of the formation of the Canon of Scripture.

A. *With regard to the Old Testament.*

The Old Testament.

The Deutero-canonical Books.

The Jews had two Canons. We know from Josephus[1] that the Jews in Palestine did not accept as canonical, the books which Catholics term Deutero-canonical and Protestants call Apocryphal. It is, however, equally certain that they are all contained in the Greek Septuagint, which was used by the Jews at Alexandria. We find them interspersed in the Septuagint with the other books, just as in the Vulgate and our Catholic Bibles of to-day. They were therefore, undoubtedly regarded as canonical by the Alexandrian Jews. And—a fact which is far more important—almost all the quotations in the New Testament (more than 300 of the 350) are from the Septuagint. Moreover, our Lord and His Apostles gave the sanction of their authority to the Deutero-canonical Books by quoting from them in the same manner as from the Books of the Palestinian Canon.[1] We are not, therefore, surprised to find the Fathers of the first three centuries treating these Books as Canonical. For example the Didache quotes Ecclesiasticus and Wisdom, Pope St. Clement quotes Judith, Tobias, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus and the second book of Machabees, St. Polycarp quotes Tobias, and St. Irenæus Baruch and Wisdom.

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[1] *Contra Apion.*, i. 8.

In the fourth century, however, some of the greatest Fathers, such as St. Athanasius and St. Jerome, expressed doubts as to the Canonicity of the Deutero-canonical books. Notwithstanding this fact, a Council held at Hippo in 393 and two Councils at

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[1] *Cf.* Matt. vi. 14 and Eccli. xxviii. 2; Matt. xxvii. 39 and Wisd. ii. 17; Rom. i. 20-32 and Wisd. xiii. xv.; 1 Cor. ii. 19 and Judith viii. 14; 1 Pet. i. 6 and Wisd. iii. 3; Jas. i. 19. and Eccli. v. 13, etc.

Carthage in 397 and 419 included them in lists of the books of Holy Scripture. We find the same decision in a Decree of Pope Innocent the First, A.D. 405. A Council held at Constantinople at the close of the seventh century, which the Greeks recognise as a continuation of the fifth and sixth Œcumenical Councils, decided the matter in the same sense. Finally, for Catholics the question was closed (if indeed it was still open) by a formal Decree of the Council of Trent.

I may perhaps be permitted to add that, apart from the Inspiration of these Books, those who neglect them suffer a very great spiritual loss. A man who reads the Book of Wisdom for the first time will, whether he believes it to be inspired or not, know at any rate that he has been introduced to a prose-poem of surpassing beauty and fascination, singularly adapted to raise his mind and heart in grateful thanks to God.

B. *With regard to the Canon of the New Testament.*

The Canon of the New Testament.

In the early ages of Christianity there was considerable doubt. On the one hand many books had been written by Apostles to local Churches, and even to individuals, and these only gradually became known to the Church Universal; on the other hand, there were books written and widely circulated by heretics which claimed to be Apostolic in origin. The matter was by no means easy and simple.

From the year 130 to the year 220 we find various lists of the Canonical books of the New Testament drawn up in various Churches, but these lists by no means agreed amongst themselves. Especially were questions raised concerning the canonicity of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Epistle of St. James, the Second of St. Peter, the Second and Third of St. John and the Apocalypse. Again, in certain Churches the Epistle of Pope St. Clement to the Corinthians and the Pastor of Hermas were admitted as canonical, whilst heretics freely mingled their apocryphal writings with the Holy Scriptures.

The rise of the Montanist heresy in the third century indirectly contributed much to the solution of vexed questions concerning the Canon. The Montanists claimed that the writings of their ecstatic Prophets had equal authority with those of the Apostles. In answer to this pretension it was generally recognised amongst Catholics that no books could be regarded as inspired, excepting those which had been written by Apostles, or (like the Gospels of Mark and Luke) with their express approbation. In accordance with this principle the Epistle of Clement and the Pastor of Hermas disappeared from the lists, as well as the Epistle which had been attributed by some to St. Barnabas, and henceforth the only question at issue was: Which books were (directly or indirectly) of Apostolic source?

We find St. Augustine[1] and St. Jerome[2] in the fourth century accepting all the books contained in our present Canon, though St. Augustine notes that some still doubted the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the Apocalypse, whilst St. Jerome observes that many denied the authenticity of the Epistles of Jude and James, the Second of Peter and the Second and Third of John. In spite of such reserves and hesitancies, Pope St. Damasus (St. Jerome was his secretary) in the year 382 issued a decree in which he expressly declared that the Holy Scriptures of the New Testament consisted of the books which are now to be found in our Bible. Henceforward the question was settled for Catholics. We find a formal decree to the same effect drawn up by the Council of Trent against the Protestant innovators, several of whom—notably Luther, who had succeeded in expunging the Deutero-canonical books from the Old Testament—were anxious also to exclude certain books from the New. Happily, however, here they failed. In this matter the force of Tradition was too strong for them, and to-day Protestants everywhere—at least those amongst their number who recognise any Scripture at all as Divine—accept without question the list of the Books of the New Testament authorised as Canonical by Pope St. Damasus.

It must be admitted that, apart from the ecclesiastical authority, the question of the Canon is complex and difficult, and it is hard to see how those Christians who reject the Catholic Rule of Faith can have certainty as to the authenticity of their Scriptures; yet for them certainty as to the Bible is presupposed and is of the very essence and groundwork of their belief.

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[1] *De Doctrina Christian*, 11, 12; *Enchiridion*, 8; *Serm.* ccxcix.

[2] *Ep. ad Paul*, viii; *De viris illustribus*, 1, 2, 5, 9, 18, 69.

Conclusion of the Matter.

To sum up—in the beginning the revealed Word of God consisted of the oral teaching (which we call Tradition) given by our Lord to His Apostles; to this gradually were added the Books of the New Testament, which (together with the Sacred Books of the Jews) the Church subsequently declared to be inspired by God.

When we understand what is meant by the Word of God, the meaning of *heresy* becomes clear.

Meaning of the word Heresy.

"The word *αἵρεσις* is found," writes M. Batiffol, "both in the LXX and in classical Greek; it means 'choice,' and by extension an "opinion freely chosen," and hence in a sense which implies no depreciation—a 'school' or a 'party.' Thus Josephus speaks of the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenes as being three Jewish heresies (*αἵρεσεις*). This is also the meaning of the word as employed by St. Luke in Acts v. 17, xv. 5, xxiv. 5, 14, xxviii. 22. In St. Paul's epistles it signifies a culpable descent, a schism

(Gal. v. 20; 1 Cor. xi. 19), so that heresy, which would be for a Greek philosopher a symptom of life, is for St. Paul a downright disorder."[1] Choice, when it involves the prudent use of the intelligence and the will in matters rightly open to choice, is meritorious; when used to reject God's Revelation—His word committed to the Church—it becomes a crime. To obey God's Word is our duty; to revolt against that Word—to *choose* something else in its stead—in this sense to exercise Private Judgement is, in the eyes of the Apostle, to revolt against God Himself—a deadly sin. For this reason he wrote to Titus: "A man that is a heretic[2] after the first and second admonition avoid; knowing that he that is such a one is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned by his own judgment."[3]

We have no right to "*judge*" against the Faith that has been handed down, for in this matter we have no means of judging. Therefore to judge against the Faith involves setting up our judgement—which is the word of man—against the Word of God. Heresy is simply picking and choosing in religion. In politics, in natural science, in literature, such picking and choosing is highly desirable when exercised by those who are competent; in religion, from the very beginning of Christianity, it has been held to be indefensible.

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[1] *Primitive Catholicism* (English Edition), p. 114, n. 4.

[2] *αἱρετικός.* This derivative from *αἵρεσις* appears here for the first time, it is found neither in the LXX nor in classical Greek.

[3] Titus iii. 10.

And of Heterodoxy.

The word *heterodoxy* is regarded by St. Paul as a synonym for *heresy*. "If any man teacheth otherwise (ἑτεροδιδασκαλεῖ) and consent not to the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ, he is proud, knowing nothing."[1]

It has been said as a gibe that "heterodoxy is your doctrine, and orthodoxy is my doctrine." On the contrary, orthodoxy consists in adhering to the "sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ" committed to the keeping of His Church, which is "the pillar and ground of the truth."[2] Heterodoxy is "to think otherwise."[3]

We may fitly close this chapter with the closing words of St. Paul's first Epistle to Timothy.

"O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane novelties of words, and oppositions of knowledge falsely so called, which some promising, have erred concerning the Faith."[4]

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[1] 1 Tim. vi. 3, 4.

[2] 1 Tim. iii. 15.

[3] *Cf.* 1 Tim. vi. 3: εἴ τις ἑτεροδιδασκαλεῖ.

[4] 1 Tim. vi. 20, 21.

CHAPTER XIV

DEVELOPMENT OF DOCTRINE

No New public revelation after the death of St. John.

WE have seen that the Word of Christ was made known first to the Apostles, was entrusted by them as a Tradition (written and oral) to the custody of the Church, has been guarded by the Church as a sacred Deposit, and handed down, through the assistance of the Holy Spirit, to last unimpaired to the end of time. Catholics have always regarded it as a first principle that, since the death of the last Apostle, there can be no further public Revelation. I have already called attention to the exhortation of the Apostle. "Hold the form of sound words which thou hast heard from me. . . . O Timothy, guard the Deposit, avoiding profane novelties of words."[1]

The Deposit to be guarded.

Let us now listen to the commentary in the sixth century of Vincent of Lerins upon this apostolic exhortation: "Guard," he says, "the Deposit. What is the Deposit?

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[1] 2 Tim. i. 13; *cf.* 1 Tim. vi. 20, 21.

It is that which has been entrusted to thee, not that which has been discovered by thee. It is that which thou hast received, not that which thou hast found out for thyself. It is a matter not of cleverness, but something thou hast been taught. It does not appertain to private usage, but to public Tradition. It is something which has been brought to thee, not something which has been brought forth by thee—something in which thy place is not that of an originator but of a guardian, not that of a master but of a disciple, not that of a leader but of a follower."[1] In these words we find the echo of the teaching of the Fathers of the Church from the beginning, in complete harmony with which the Vatican Council teaches us that "the Holy Spirit was not promised to the Successors of St. Peter, in order that from His Revelation they might make known a new Doctrine, but that by His Assistance they might religiously (*sancte*) guard and faithfully expound the Revelation or Deposit of Faith which has been handed down by the Apostles."[2]

Ours is no new religion. It is the ancient Faith once delivered to the Saints.

As long as the world lasts there will be no fresh Deposit of the Faith, no new Revelation of supernatural truths made known to mankind. "In the fulness of time God sent His Son."[3] He is Himself the Truth. He came to bear witness to the Truth.

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[1] *Commonit.*, 22. [2] Sess. iv., cap. 4. [3] Heb. i.

That witness once borne, nothing can be added to what God has taught His Church. Nothing may be taken away from the Divine Word. His Words shall not pass away, but will endure to the end. They suffice for all our needs. As Cardinal Newman wrote in an essay which appeared in the *Atlantis* of July, 1858: "Every Catholic holds that the Christian dogmas were in the Church from the time of the Apostles, that they were ever in their substance what they are now."

The Evolution of Dogma.

But the further question arises: Is it possible for this Revelation once given to the Apostles to be made clearer in the course of the ages as to its meaning and full significance? Is any growth, evolution, development possible of the Deposit of Faith, so that what it contains only implicity may become explicit? Is there any development of the Church's worship and of her organisation which is according to the mind and will of Christ? To these questions Catholic theology answers emphatically in the affirmative.

Let me premise that Divine Revelation consists partly of historical facts, partly of doctrinal propositions.

Revelation consists of historical facts and doctrinal propositions.

With regard to historical facts, it is obvious that no further clearness of apprehension is possible. "Christ was born of a Virgin at Bethlehem." This sentence contains two assertions. "Christ was born of a Virgin"—"His birthplace was Bethlehem." No amplification of either is possible without the introduction of fresh and absolutely new material. There is here nothing hidden under the surface, nothing which may be drawn out by reflection. We have definite statements as to matters of fact which have to be either accepted or rejected.

Far otherwise is it with any doctrinal statement whatsoever. Every such statement also contains a fact, but it is a fact which, if it has direct reference to God, can only be received by analogy, since it is only by reference to human things that we can arrive at any conception of those which are divine. For example, I am taught that "God is infinitely wise." This at once sets me thinking. What do I know of wisdom? I can only imagine a wise human being—for I have had no experience of wisdom elsewhere. But I have to avoid anthropomorphism, that is to say conceiving of God, who is Himself a pure Spirit, in terms of man. Still, when I say that God is infinitely wise, I can only imagine that all the wisdom which I see in men comes from God, as an effect comes from its cause, and that God Himself possesses in an infinite and transcendental manner the Wisdom which He bestows upon His creatures in limited measure. It is only from the analogy of human wisdom that I can rise to the thought of the essential wisdom which is an Attribute of the Creator. And here I possess something which, if

I will ponder it day by day, is capable of daily growth in my mind.

A doctrinal Revelation, that is to say, a Revelation which is concerned with anything beyond events, must necessarily be clothed in words, if it is to procure a lodgment in the human intellect; but words are merely conventional symbols for ideas, and ideas, as they become assimilated, provoke and stimulate thought, which in its turn asks questions. Now these questions must be answered, unless the ideas are to remain sterile or at least practically inoperative. And thus the doctrine itself grows. There is first the period which we may term embryonic, when the doctrine in question is, as it were, hidden in the womb of Mother Church, where it is gradually clothed with flesh, until at length it emerges, and is plainly visible to all.

The Word was made Flesh.

Let us take for example St. John's statement of that which Catholics believe to be the primary truth of revealed religion—"The Word was made Flesh." Here we have three ideas (1) The Word (2) was made (3) Flesh. At once there are three ideas conveyed to the mind; also at once three questions arise in the mind with regard to these ideas. "Who exactly is the Word?" "What precisely is here meant by Flesh?" "How did He become that which He was not previously?" In the early ages of Christianity the result of reckless speculation on such questions as these by men who disregarded the teaching of the Catholic Church was multiform, and inevitably destructive, heresy; on the other hand the result of reverent, but none the less keen and subtle analysis, under the guidance of the Church (protected, as we believe, by the Holy Spirit promised by our Lord) is seen in the sublime doctrine of the Incarnation of God, as we have it defined in the Creeds and by the Councils of the Church.

The old heresies dead.

The old heresies have lost their living interest. As one reads in any minuteness of detail about Arius, or Macedonius, or Nestorius and Eutyches and their fellows one feels dry as dust. These heretics are dead and have left no vocal representatives. The Catholic Faith which they resisted prevails—notwithstanding the rise of new heresies—the strongest Christian force in the world at this hour. But the Catholic Faith is in our time, as it was already in their time, a development—a development of that which was from the beginning contained in the Revelation made to the Apostles.

The Catholic Faith Living.

True development and false.

Development has taken place through the free action of the faculties of the mind, and true development has, for the most part been recognised as such, by means of the condemnation of a development which was false. Heresies could not be condemned until they had arisen. By their condemnation not only was the false development declared to be false, but also, through the opportunity provided by the necessity for the condemnation of a heresy, the truth of the true development was positively asserted.

Nestorians and the Theotokos.

It is a development of certain passages in Holy Scripture to assert that there are two Persons in Christ. Catholics know from the teaching of the Church that this development is false, but when the false development was condemned, at the same time the true development was solemnly taught to be true—the true development, that in Christ our Lord there is only one Person, the Person of the Word, and that therefore the Mother of that Divine Person is rightly called not only the Mother of Christ, but also the Mother of God. For there are not (as Nestorius and his followers falsely taught) two Christs, one human (of whom alone Mary is the Mother) and one divine. There is but one Christ. He is the Lord our God, and Mary is His Mother—the Mother of the Lord our God made Man. This is a true development of the fifth century.

Luther and Justification by Faith only.

We may take another example from the sixteenth. Luther from the consideration of certain passages in St. Paul's epistles developed his false doctrine of justification by Faith only. It became necessary, as this new doctrine spread, for the Church to condemn it as contrary to the Revelation made in the beginning. The false development became a heresy. But it is to the condemnation of this false development that we owe the statement of the true development in the luminous teaching of the Church concerning the nature of justification, and the relation of Faith to Good Works, contained in the definitions of the Council of Trent.

Office of the Catholic Church with regard to Development.

Developments therefore are inevitable. It belongs to the Catholic Church to condemn any development of doctrine, which, though it claim to be according to the Scriptures, is in fact false, and contrary to the Revelation once given to the Apostles. It also belongs to the Catholic Church to present more and more clearly in each succeeding generation the fulness of the Counsels of God committed to her keeping in the beginning of Christianity.

Analogy from Nature.

Now, in thus acting—in allowing His Revelation slowly to develop — Almighty God is acting in accordance with the laws that He has established throughout His creation, for wherever there is life there is growth. It is the Divine plan that every organisation should develop according to the laws that are proper to itself, nor does it thus lose identity with itself. The oak is in a mysterious but true sense one with the acorn, the grown-up man is one with himself as a babe. Moreover, in providing for the development of doctrine in His Church the Holy Spirit has been mindful of the needs and limitations of the men who are its recipients. Let us listen to Cardinal Newman:

Cardinal Newman and Development.

> "While Scripture nowhere recognises itself or asserts the inspiration of those passages which are most essential, it distinctly anticipates the development of Christianity both as a polity and as a doctrine. In one of our Lord's parables, 'the Kingdom of Heaven' is even compared to 'a grain of mustard seed, which a man took and hid in his field, which indeed is the least of all seeds, but when it is grown it is the greatest amongst herbs, and becometh a tree,' and, as St. Mark words it, 'shooteth out great branches, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.' And again in the same chapter of St. Mark, 'so is the Kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground, and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up he knoweth not how, for the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself.' Here an internal element of life, whether principle or doctrine, is spoken of rather than any mere external manifestation, and it is observable that the spontaneous, as well as the gradual character of the growth is intimated. This description of the process corresponds to what has been above [in the immediately preceding sections] observed respecting development, viz.: that it is not an effect of wishing and resolving, or of forced enthusiasm, or of any mechanism or reasoning, or of any mere subtlety of intellect, but comes of its own innate power of expansion within the mind in its season—though with the use of reflection and argument and original thought—more

> or less as it may happen, with a dependence on the ethical growth of the mind itself, and with a reflex influence upon it. Again, the parable of the leaven describes the development of doctrine in another respect—its active, engrossing and interpenetrating power. From the necessity, then of the case . . . and from the example of Scripture, we may fairly conclude that Christian doctrine admits of formal, legitimate, and true developments, that is, of developments contemplated by its Divine Author."[1]

Cardinal Newman proceeds to show that, as God in nature not only creates but also conserves, (for "preservation is involved in the idea of creation"),[2] so we may be certain that He has given us an infallible authority to separate false development from true.

> "The circumstance that a work has begun makes it more probable that it will proceed. We have no reason to suppose that there is so great a distinction of dispensation between ourselves and the first generation of Christians, as that they had a living infallible guidance and we have not. . . . *As creation argues continual governance, so are Apostles harbingers of Popes.*"[3]

Once more:

> "If Christianity be a social religion, as it certainly is, and if it be based on certain ideas acknowledged as divine, or a Creed (which shall here be assumed), and if these ideas have various aspects, and make distinct impressions on different minds, and issue in

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[1] *Development of Christian Doctrine*, chap. ii., sections 16, 17.

[2] *Ibid.*, chap. ii., section 10.

[3] *Ibid.*

> consequence in a multiplicity of developments, true or false, or mixed, as has been shown, what power will suffice to meet and to do justice to these conflicting conditions, but a supreme authority ruling and reconciling individual judgments by a divine right and a recognised wisdom? In barbarous times the will is reached through the senses, but in an age in which reason, as it is called, is the standard of truth and right, it is abundantly evident to anyone, who mixes ever so little with the world, that, if things are left to themselves, every individual will have his own view on them and take his own course, that two or three agree to-day to part company to-morrow, that Scripture will be read in contrary ways, and history according to the apologue, will have to different comers its silver shield, and its golden—that philosophy, taste, prejudice, passion, party, caprice will find no common measure, unless there be some supreme power to control the mind and to compel agreement. There can be no combination on the basis of truth without an organ of truth. . . . If Christianity is both social and dogmatic, and intended for all ages, it must, humanly speaking, have an infallible expounder."[1]

True Developments guaranteed as such by the Church.

The same Church, One, Catholic, and Apostolic, which has handed down to us, and now teaches us, the Tradition received from the Apostles, declares authoritatively and therefore (in virtue of the Promises of Christ) infallibly —that certain developments, whether in teaching or practice, are foreign to the Apostolic

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[1] *Development of Christian Doctrine*, chap. ii., section 13.

Tradition, and, therefore, to be rejected—whilst others are to be accepted as really contained from the beginning (though it may be only implicitly and obscurely) in that Tradition—to which consequently they truly belong as an integral, component part.

The Trinity.

For example, faith in the Most Holy Trinity was first expressed in the Formula: "I believe in One God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost." There was no attempt to define in what respect God is One, or in what respect He is Three. It was only under the pressure of heresy that the Church defined that God is One in Substance, Three in Personality; or that the Holy Ghost is to be adored together with the Father and the Son, and that He proceeds from Them Both.

Christology.

Similarly, with regard to the one Person and two Natures in our Lord Jesus Christ, at first there was the single formula: "I believe in Jesus Christ the Son of God." It was in consequence of heretical misstatements that the Church was led to investigate in what sense Christ is the Son of God. Doubts were cleared up—errors avoided. The exact meaning (so far as human words are capable of conveying it) of what had always been believed and was expressly taught in our Lord's own saying, "I and the Father are One," was made clear for all time and placed beyond the reach of controversy, at least for Catholics. Often some convenient word was found to stereotype the revealed doctrine, such as Trinity, or Consubstantial, and not only the doctrine but the word itself which expressed the doctrine was imposed upon the consciences of Catholics as a hallmark and at the same time a watchword of the Faith.

The Holy Eucharist.

Or again, the fact of the Real Presence in the Eucharist was held as firmly by all Catholics from the beginning as it is to-day. From the beginning it was known to all "initiated" Christians that the Blessed Sacrament was the true Body of Christ. It was only when this truth was in very late times denied that the Church enshrined the sacred Mystery in the word Transubstantiation, thus to define and express the revealed dogma in terms of scientific precision. Thus far we may find a parallel in the process of development and theological statement which found its term in the words Trinity and Consubstantial.

Devotion.

But we may go further. Let us pass from dogma to devotional worship. It may be freely acknowledged that in all probability early Christians would have been surprised at such a rite as that which we know as Exposition and Benediction of the Most Holy Sacrament. The fact that the Divine Mystery is not only the Body of Christ, and therefore to be adored, but also that It may lawfully be raised high upon a Throne, that incense may be offered to It, whilst Litanies are chanted, and that finally It may be raised in solemn blessing by a priest over the heads of the multitude bowed in adoration—all this would have surprised them. It would, I believe, have surprised them only for a moment. There are certain parts of Ireland and of the Scottish Highlands in which the Faith has been always kept, where, within living memory, the rite of Benediction was unknown. When those simple Catholics were present at Benediction for the first time they were surprised. The service was unfamiliar to them. But when they understood its meaning and saw the Sacred Host exposed above the altar, in some cases they wept for joy. They, like their fathers before them, believed in the Real Presence, and recognised at once the legitimate development. So would it be with the early Christians, were they to "revisit this earth, and to come northward, and to travel until they reached a fair city, seated among groves, green meadows, and fair streams, where they would turn from many a high aisle and solemn cloister and ask the way to some small chapel where Mass was said in the populous alley or forlorn suburb."[1] After Mass was over, were Benediction to follow, they might indeed be surprised. Benediction would not be familiar to them in all its parts, as would be the Holy Mass. And when all had been explained, we may be sure that they would have but one question to ask: "But the Church—does the Church allow, does the Church approve this most touching ceremony?" Once satisfied on this point, they would be at rest, for when living here below they knew full well that, as to Mary the Virgin was committed the ceremonial of the Divine Infancy —Hers it was to swathe and to move and to adore the Body of her Lord in His weakness, even as God inspired her—so to the Church and to the Church alone have been committed the custody and the ceremonial of the Blessed Sacrament. What the Church permits in the worship of her hidden Lord, swathed beneath the sacramental bands, that all Catholics know at once to have been permitted under the guidance of the Spirit of God, though, of themselves, without the permission of the Church, never could they have ventured to make so free. It is a legitimate development, in practice lawful and pleasing to God, of that which is implicitly contained in the explicit doctrine of the Real Presence handed down by the Apostles to the Church—not as a treasure to be wrapped in a napkin, but to be put out to generous interest for the glory of God and the profit of the souls of men.

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[1] *Development of Christian Doctrine,* chap. ii., section 3.

Three Stages in Development.

It often has happened that three stages may be distinguished in the process of the development of Catholic doctrine. In the first stage a truth is in an amorphous state as regards its expression, it was only held implicitly as involved in some universal principle, or perhaps we find it exhibited in the practice of the

Church rather than in distinct enunciation; in the second stage, the truth in question is often stated imperfectly, has to run the gauntlet of controversy, and thus becomes more obscure than in its first stage when it was denied by no one; in the third stage, after careful inquiry by the Church, it is stated clearly, its truth is solemnly and authoritatively declared, it is publicly preached and becomes known explicitly to all the Faithful. As two examples where we can see this process at work—first thesis—then antithesis—finally synthesis—we may consider the history of the dissensions in the Church as to the validity of Baptism conferred by heretics, and the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin.

Heretical Baptism.

No question was raised in the beginning as to the validity of heretical Baptism. In Rome it was never repeated. Here we have the first stage. There was no discussion. Baptism by whomsoever conferred, if duly administered, was treated as valid. Gradually, however, the question was raised, especially in Africa in the third century. It was argued that as no man can give what he has not got, so a heretic cannot give by Baptism that which is not his—participation in the Unity of the Church. Great authorities like St. Cyprian took this view and maintained it strongly. Here we have the second stage—acute discussion amongst Catholics, much doubt where no doubt had before existed, much obscurity. Indeed, as we read the disputations (of the time) we see men groping their way through darkness to light. And, as always, light came from Rome. Pope St. Stephen settled the question in accordance with the ancient Tradition, but against the plausible views of the Bishops of the most important Church of Africa. Here we have the third stage. Once it became clear that Rome had spoken authoritatively—at least so soon as it was recognised that the dispute questioned the Deposit of the Faith—for all Catholics controversy is at an end for ever. We know now that in the original doctrine of Baptism handed to the Church by the Apostles there is the implication that heretics can lawfully baptize. Here we have a true development.

The Immaculate Conception of Our Lady.

Or with regard to the Conception of our Lady without sin. In the Holy Scriptures she is shown us as the Woman whose Seed should crush the serpent's head. Again, we recognise her as the Woman whose Child should rule the nations with a rod of iron—the Woman clothed with the sun against whom that "old serpent" wages undying war. She has been filled with grace. She is the Mother of our Lord, and He is "separate from sinners."[1] There is nothing explicit concerning her sinlessness, but it was always felt by Catholics,[1] that sin could not come nigh to her, who was so nearly allied with the Redeemer and with the work of Redemption. "I will place enmities between Thee and the Woman" was the Divine prediction. She is the Woman of Prophecy. Her enmity with Satan was established by God. In accordance with this truth, we find the earliest Fathers of the Church declaring that, as our Lord was the second Adam, so was His Mother the second Eve. But since this is the case, as the first Eve was created without sin, so, if the parallel really holds, was the second Eve. The antitype will not yield to the type. Here is the first stage. The doctrine of the sinless Conception of Mary is not indeed taught explicitly, but it is clearly involved in what *was* expressly taught. The second stage arrived, when men began to use their intellects on all the questions surrounding Original Sin, and Redemption. Then it was for the first time suggested that grace was conferred upon our Lady not in the first moment of her existence (as upon Eve) but in the second. There was discussion, doubt, a certain amount of obscurity, until at length it was time in the Providence of God for the third stage. The Church solemnly closed all discussion amongst Catholics by authoritatively teaching that the Mother of our Lord, preserved through the Merits of her Son and Saviour from the sin which is the consequence of the Fall of man, received in the first instant of her existence the gift which had been bestowed upon Eve at her creation—the gift of the supernatural grace of God. That which was implicit has become explicit. The Immaculate Conception of Mary is no new doctrine. Growth there has been; change there has not been.

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[1] 1 Gen. iii. 15; Apoc. xii. 1-17; Luke i. 18; Heb. vii. 26.

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[1] *Cf.* St. Augustine, "Excepta Virgine Matre, de qua, quum de peccatis agimus, nullam prorsus habere volo quæstionem" (*De Natura et gratia*, cap. xxxvi.)

"So there may be growth in the Faith not change," wrote Vincent of Lerins. "Now the growth belongs to itself; to advancement on lines proper to change belongs transformation into something else."[1]

Examples of this growth, which is not change, in the doctrines of the Faith might be multiplied indefinitely. We have, however, said enough to exemplify the great principle that, under the assistance of the Spirit of God, the full meanings of the ancient truths of Revelation are being ever taught more clearly to God's people in the Catholic Church —to whose care they were committed. Truth is always the same in its substance and essence. Fossilised it cannot remain, for it cannot too often be repeated that, wherever there is life, there we find growth and progress. Thus is the wish of the Fathers of the Vatican Council daily fulfilled:

"May the understanding, knowledge, wisdom of individuals and of all, of each man and of the whole Church, increase and mightily advance throughout all ages and centuries."[1]

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[1] *Commonitorium*, cap. xxiii.

Yes, for, as Jesus Himself "advanced in wisdom and age and grace before God and men,"[2] so too will His Holy Church advance with the advancing years in wisdom and in grace—His Holy Church which is His Mystical Body, sojourning awhile, as of old He sojourned, upon this earth—living a life that is not merely alike in characteristics, but is even the counterpart and mystical reproduction of the earthly Life that once was His.

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[1] *Constitutio de Fide,* cap. iv.

[2] Luke ii. 52.

CHAPTER XV

THE ONE CATHOLIC CHURCH OF GOD

THE Christian Rule of Faith is God's Word "proposed" to us—that is, made known to us—by His Church, to whose custody it was entrusted by Christ.

Where is the One True Church of Christ to be found?

The question remains to be examined which, amongst the various bodies of Christians that we see around us is the One True Church of Christ—the Church which Christ founded in the beginning upon a Rock, which He called *His* Church—"My Church"—upon which He sent His Holy Spirit on Pentecost—which is the heir of His Promises, guided by Him into all Truth to the consummation of the world, the Guardian of His Mysteries?

Up to the present point in our investigations I have taken it for granted that the Church of Christ is that Church which all over the world is known, and (as we shall see) has been known from the earliest Christian times, as THE CATHOLIC CHURCH—that Church whose members are in full communion one with another, and in ecclesiastical submission each of them to his own Bishop, and all of them to the Bishop of Rome.

However, we will now look at the matter without prepossession and consider whether it be possible to regard any other Church as the One Church of Christ.

Is there One True Church at all?

But at the outset of this enquiry we are faced with the fact that many people in England to-day (who, inasmuch as they believe that Christ died for their sins, with right call themselves Christians) deny that there is One True Church of God at all. They maintain that the various churches are all parts or branches of the One Church, and that in their contradictions they manifest "various aspects of the one truth," like, as we are often told, the various facets of a diamond—so that, since there are many men and many minds, each man may believe what he pleases, according to the constitution and bent of his mind.

The Unity of Truth.

Now, if there be any force in what I have already urged in this book, it will be manifest at once that this contention breaks down the moment that we examine it. For Christ came to teach Truth. The medium through which He teaches is His Church. But Truth is one, even as God is one. God cannot contradict Himself, nor can Truth be in contradiction with Truth. It is therefore a thing impossible—involving a contradiction in terms—that the Church of Christ should be in discord in her teaching in her various parts. God has sent His Son to teach Truth. "For this was I born and for this did I come into the world—to bear witness to the Truth."[1] Such was "His good confession under Pontius Pilate."[2] "As the Father sent Me, so send I you"[3] was His last commission to the Apostles whom He had chosen. It is true that these words in their first application had reference to the forgiveness of sins, but they certainly can also be legitimately referred to the teaching of Truth. Just as Christ taught "with authority,"[4] so must His Church teach, just as Christ taught everywhere the same thing, so must His Church teach, for He Himself has witnessed that "every kingdom or city or house divided against itself shall not stand."[5] The House of God, and City of God, and Kingdom of God, which is His Church, cannot be divided, because, were it to be divided, it would fail in its great function of teaching the One Truth.

The Church teaches with Authority and Unity.

If I, or any other man, simply desiring knowledge of the Truth, question the Church of Christ, being ready to "hear the Church"[6] and to accept any answer that I may receive, it is obvious that the answer must be consistent with itself, and that it must be the same answer in every part of the world—otherwise I should not know whom I am hearing (for, since Christ does not contradict Himself, the voice of a church which contradicts itself cannot be the voice of Christ), nor should I know what I am to believe. I should remain as I was before I questioned at all, in a position of doubt and uncertainty.

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[1] John xviii. 37.

[2] 1 Tim. vi. 13.

[3] John xx. 21.

[4] Matt. vii. 29.

[5] Matt. xii. 25.

[6] Matt. xviii. 17.

Uselessness of a divided Church.

A divided Church will convince no man of anything concerning which he was not convinced already. The facets of the diamond show various beauties of the precious stone. There can however be no beauty in one teacher assuring you that Christ is really present in the Eucharist by the conversion of bread into His Body and of wine into His Blood, and in another teacher maintaining that such a belief is one of the grossest of delusions. There can be no beauty in one teacher assuring you that your sins will be forgiven you by God after sorrowful confession of those sins to a priest, whilst another maintains that such a confession places man in the place of God, and, far from bringing forgiveness, is in itself displeasing to the Most High. No, if the Church is to teach—and it was to teach that Christ sent her on her divine Mission—she must be one in her teaching. Moreover it is obvious and certain that to produce unity of teaching she must be one, visibly, in her external constitution, for all experience shows that teachers who are externally divided will not long maintain unity in their teaching. We know that the Apostle writes of *One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism.* As our Lord is One, so is the Faith, and, (since we receive the Faith through the Church) so is the Church of Christ, into which we are baptised. Thus our Lord spoke of "My Church" not of "My Churches," and with reason the Creed alleges the Unity of the Church of Christ as the first mark or sign whereby she may be known. She is One, even as God is One. The last prayer of her Divine Founder has been heard by the Father who sent Him into the World to found the Kingdom, which is His Church. "Holy Father keep them in Thy Name, whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be One, as We also are . . . *that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me.*"[1]

It is often objected that this conception of the unity of the Church "narrows." Obviously, the possession of any truth in a certain sense "narrows," but it also frees and elevates, and becomes often the indispensable stepping stone to further truth. You may say if you will, that knowledge of the multiplication table "narrows." Such knowledge certainly precludes the possibility of anyone who possesses it maintaining that seven times six make forty-three, but it is also a knowledge which frees me from ignorance, and upon this knowledge is securely built the whole science of mathematics. Similarly, knowledge of revealed truth frees me from an ignorance which is far more baneful than could be any ignorance of how to work sums correctly. Knowledge of revealed truth elevates my soul to God, and upon this knowledge is securely built the whole science of His love, which is Eternal Life.[1] But the knowledge of revealed truth like every other knowledge is impossible without definite teaching, and definite teaching must be either *one* or *worthless*, because if it is not *one*, but consists of *two* or *three* contradictories, some of it must necessarily be false. And to teach falsehood is worthless. From all this it is clear that those persons who believe that Christianity gives them a definite revelation from God through the Church of Christ must also—unless they are altogether to abandon consistency—believe that the Church of Christ is one in her teaching—for, unless the Church of Christ be one in her teaching, a definite Revelation through the Church is impossible. In so far, then, as any Christian religious body is one in her teaching, that is, teaches the same truths everywhere, not tolerating heresies or variations from her teaching—from this point of view that body has a right to be considered the Church of Christ.

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[1] John xvii. 11-21.

Unity of teaching, however, does not stand alone and cannot be considered the sole mark of the

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[1] John xvii. 3.

Church of Christ, otherwise a body might be the One Church of God which was to be found only in one village in the whole world, provided that its members were taught and believed alike. The Church of Christ is not only one in her teaching; she is also Catholic, or world-wide. This is her second great mark.

The True Church of Christ is also worldwide in extension.

We read in St. John's Gospel that our Lord came to gather all the people of the world into a Unity.[1] Until the time of the coming of Christ, those who served God according to their consciences depended entirely, outside of Judæa, upon the Natural Law and those remnants of the primitive Revelation, which survived everywhere in more or less mutilated guise. The Jews indeed had received a special Law from God, but the great function of that Law was to lead men to Christ, like the slave who led boys to school.[2] Judaism was essentially racial. When a proselyte submitted to Israel he was thereby affiliated to the Jewish people and had to submit to the ceremonial law of Moses. When the Gospel of Christ superseded the Law, a world-wide religion, transcending in its scope and appeal all national distinctions, was to take the place of that which was purely local. "Go," said our Lord, "Teach all nations. Preach the Gospel to every creature."[3]

We have already seen that this Gospel was to be

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[1] John xi. 52.

[2] Gal. iii. 24.

[3] Matt. xxviii. 19; Mark xv. 15.

One, we now see that it was also to be *everywhere and for all men* who would accept it. "In Christ Jesus," wrote the great Apostle, "there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female, but all are one in Him."[1] National distinctions—the great distinction between Jew and Gentile; social distinctions—the enormous line of cleavage between owner and slave; even, to a great extent, the fundamental distinction of sex (women are, it is true, debarred from the priesthood)—whilst keeping their own place in the natural order, were in the supernatural order to disappear in the world-wide Unity that had come to birth—the Unity of Catholicism. So from the beginning the Catholic Church taught that neither circumcision nor uncircumcision profited anything—but a new life;[2] raised women to their high estate in Christendom; and, before she was yet able to emancipate the slave, succeeded in bringing slave and master on a level before their common Lord. No Church can be the One True Church of Christ which, in matters of religion either takes count of social distinctions, or is bounded by any boundaries of clime or tongue.

The True Church of God is One—the same in every land. And in Catholicism this is not mere theory; it is realised before our eyes. As I write, a terrible war is raging. It may be that some German Catholic soldier, maddened by the fury of the frightfulness to which he had been exhorted, and perhaps on fire with strong drink, has committed unspeakable deeds against some hapless Belgian village. If that poor man repent of his crimes, he will remember, for his soul's salvation, that his faith is the same as that of the Belgian parish priest who has witnessed his infamies, and may, without misgiving, confess those infamies to that priest, who as the Minister of Christ, will rejoice to bestow upon him not reproaches, but consolation and forgiveness. This is something without parallel on earth. It is the miracle of the world-wide Church showing in our days more manifestly than even in those of St. Paul himself that in Christ Jesus there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither Belgian nor German, nor French nor English, but that the Catholic soldiers of all nations—even when warring with one another—may be one in Him.

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[1] Gal. iii. 28; Col. iii. 11.

[2] *Cf.* Gal. vi. 15.

The True Church of God is *One; she is also scattered over all the world.* She is in every place—yet *One.*

The Two Marks of Unity and Catholicism make One Mark.

It will be seen that these two marks of Unity and Catholicism run into one another, so that they do not admit of separation, and in fact are one mark. Wherever they are conjoined, there is the true Church. Wherever, that is, you find a religious body at unity with itself—all its members believing the same thing—which is also in visible union with other bodies all over the world, believing exactly as it believes—there you know that you have, not only in name but also in fact, a *Catholic Church.* On the other hand, wherever we see a mere "National Church" in isolation from the rest of Christendom—there it is plain that we are beholding a church that has been separated from the True Church of Christ, as a bough may be separated from its tree, or as a limb may be amputated from the body to which it once belonged.

St. Augustine and the Church which is worldwdie.

It is well known that this test as to where is the true Church of Christ—the test of world-wide Unity—is always applied with emphasis by the great Fathers of the fourth and succeeding centuries. For example, this is the meaning of the *Orbis Terrarum* to which St. Augustine perpetually appeals in his controversies with heresy and schism—not "the world" as the phrase is often rendered, but, as the context always shows, what he calls the *Catholica*, that is to say, the Church which is dispersed everywhere, and everywhere is at Unity with herself. The *Orbis Terrarum* is "the *Catholic world*."

It is not so well-known or generally recognised that the same principle underlies the teaching of St. Paul, and of the Christian literature of the first and second centuries.

I recently read in the *Spectator* that its Editor believed, as against Catholics, not in a Church, but in Churches. He added: "So did St. Paul." The excuse for this statement can only lie in the fact that St. Paul often calls the Church of a city

St. Paul and the Editor of the "Spectator."

what of course it is—a Church, or the Church of that city. But so do Catholics to-day. If St. Paul spoke of "The Church of God that is at Corinth," we to-day speak freely of "the Church of God that is at Clifton," or "the Church of God that is at Venice," and if St. Paul terms the Churches of any region Churches, as "the Churches of Judæa" or the "Churches of Macedonia," so we speak to-day of the Churches of France or Italy (meaning thereby the various episcopal sees of those countries). But to make the statement of the Editor of the *Spectator* more than verbally plausible, he should be able to show that when the Apostle wrote of *Churches* he was referring to religious bodies *out of communion with one another and varying in doctrine.* Of this, as we need hardly say, there is not the slightest trace in the Epistles of St. Paul. On the contrary, the Apostle throughout presupposes that the Churches to which he writes are knit together in the closest communion in the One Faith, having received One "Tradition," and forming One visible Body—Jews and Greeks becoming members of the same Body. And this Body, which is not in one place only, but is to be planted in every place, he calls, as Catholics have ever done, *The Church.* Thus when he wrote to the Galatians: "Beyond measure I persecuted the Church of God and wasted it";[1] or to the Corinthians: "I am not worthy to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God";[1] or when he assured the Ephesians that "Christ is the Head of the Church, whose Saviour He is";[2] or again that "Christ loved the Church and delivered Himself up for it, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or mark or any such thing"[3] —these words were not written of any merely local body, but of the One Body of Christ which is everywhere. They were written of that Church which St. Paul declares to be "the House of God" as well as —the pillar and the ground of the Truth."[4] A house built by men for the use of men can only have a limited number of inhabitants; the House of God which is His Church, will house all those, all over the world, who will seek admittance within its open doors. When it is a question of the House of God there is no question of houses; the reference is to one House. This one House, it is true, consists of many houses, but of many houses which are all so united that there neither is, nor can there be, any flaw in the Unity of the Building, whose Builder is God Himself.[5]

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[1] Gal. i. 13.

When we turn from the teaching of St. Paul to consider that of the very early Fathers, we must remember how scanty are the Christian writings that have come down to us from the first two centuries of our era. There is extant no treatise of this period which treats professedly on the Church. Still, enough remains to prove that the conception of a world-wide Church whose members were closely united in One Faith and Ecclesiastical Government existed from the beginning. Within our limits we can only give the shortest quotations and will take them from three continents. St. Ignatius of Antioch and a letter from the Church of Smyrna may represent Asia, St. Irenæus may stand for Europe, and St. Clement of Alexandria for Africa.

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[1] 1 Cor. xvi. 9.

[2] Eph. v. 23.

[3] Eph. v. 25, 27.

[4] 1 Tim. iii. 15.

[5] *Cf.* Heb. iii. 6.

The Early Fathers and the Church.

St. Ignatius of Antioch is thought to have been the child whom our Lord placed in the midst of His Apostles, with the words, "Unless you become as this little child you shall not enter the Kingdom of Heaven."[1] He certainly was a disciple of the Apostles. Now, we find him writing as follows to the Philadelphians: "I did therefore my part as a man who is on the side of Unity. Where there is division and anger, there God abides not. But the Lord forgives all men when they repent, if repenting they return to the Unity of God and to the communion of the Bishop."[2] Again, he wrote to the Church of Smyrna that the Lord in whom we believe with "immovable faith" was born of Mary the Virgin, baptized by John, nailed to the Cross

St. Ignatius of Antioch.

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[1] Matt. xviii. 2, 3.

[2] *Philad.*, viii.

under Pontius Pilate, and rose again "in order that He might set up a standard unto all the ages for His saints and faithful people, whether amongst Jews or Gentiles, in the *One Body of the Church*."[1]

Letter from the Church of Smyrna.

St. Polycarp, a disciple of St. John, was Bishop of Smyrna. He suffered death for the Faith and a letter was written giving an account of his martyrdom from "the Church of God that sojourneth at Smyrna to the Church of God that sojourneth at Philomelium in Phrygia. In this letter the writer tells us how St. Polycarp before his death "at length brought his prayer to an end, after remembering all who at any time had lived near him, small and great, high and low, and all the Catholic Church throughout the world."[2] He prayed that in his last hour not merely for the local church of which he was bishop and for his own friends, but also for "the Catholic Church[3] throughout the world," regarded as a Unity.

St. Irenæus.

St. Irenæus as a youth lived at Smyrna, under the eyes of St. Polycarp, in the midst of those who, with Polycarp himself, "had enjoyed intercourse with John and with the others who had seen the Lord."[4]

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[1] *Smyrn.*, i.

[2] *Martyr. Polyc.*, viii.

[3] It is interesting to remember that the phrase *Catholic Church* had first been employed by St. Ignatius writing to the Smyrnians (Smyrn. viii. 2).

[4] *Irenæus apud Euseb.*, H.E., v. 20, 24, 27.

Consequently, the teaching of St. Irenæus, like that of St. Ignatius and St. Polycarp, is what is called *Sub-Apostolic*. It comes from the disciples of the Apostles.

Towards the years 155 we find St. Irenæus at Rome, and when the persecution under Marcus Aurelius broke out, he went again to the Eternal City, this time as the bearer of a letter from the Confessors of Lyons to Pope Eleutherius. Shortly after his return from Rome he was made Bishop of Lyons. It was at this period of his life that he wrote his great work against the Gnostics, entitled *De Hæreticis*. In the course of his work we read that "A spiritual disciple will judge those who cause division, who are destitute of the Love of God and look to their own profit rather than to the Unity of the Church, who for small reasons, and for any reasons, cut and divide, and so far as is in their power, destroy the great and glorious Body of Christ, who speak peace and make war, who truly strain out the gnat and swallow the camel; for from them can come no reformation so great as is the harm of schism. He will judge also all those who are outside the Truth, that is, those who are outside the Church."[1]

We are also told that each one of the Faithful receives at Baptism "a fixed Rule of Faith."[2] Thus it is, he continues, that "the Church having accepted this teaching and this Faith, as we have said, diligently guards it, and having been spread throughout the world, is as though she dwelt in one house. She believes what she has received as though she possessed but one soul and one heart; in like manner, she preaches and teaches and hands down as though she had one mouth. For though there are various languages in the world, still the strength of the Tradition is one and the same. Nor do the Churches which have been founded in Germany believe otherwise, or otherwise hand down, nor those which are in Spain, nor those which are in Gaul, nor those which are in the East, nor those which are in Egypt, nor those which are in Lybia, nor those which are in Judæa. Just as the sun, God's creature, is one and the same in the whole universe, so too the preaching of the truth is a light which shines everywhere and enlightens all men who wish to come to know it. So that the most eloquent of Bishops can teach nothing else . . . nor can he who is weakest in speech diminish it in any way."[1] For, says St. Irenæus, "the universal Church is in every place."[2] It would seem impossible to lay down more categorically the Unity of the Catholic Church and Faith—that the True Church is everywhere, that she claims to go everywhere and that everywhere she is the same. "One Faith, one soul, one heart, one mouth," is hers in every spot.

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[1] *C. Hær.* IV. xxxiii. 1, 7.

[2] *Id.*, i. 9, 4: *κανόνα τῆς ἀληθείας ἀκλινῆ.*

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[1] *Hæret.* i. 10, 2 (*cf.* iii. 4, 1 ; iii. 11, 8 ; v. 20, 1, 2).

[2] *Id.*, ii. 31.

St. Clement of Alexandria.

We pass from St. Irenæus to his contemporary St. Clement of Alexandria. The witness of St. Clement is of special interest, since he is the one early Father whom Harnack and other "Liberal Theologians" venture to claim as a mystic "without any conception of a hierarchical anti-heretical Church."[1] Yet we find St. Clement himself writing as follows:

"As for us we are the children[2] guarding ourselves against the blasts of heresies that are filled with infatuation."[3]

And again, commenting on Proverbs x. 12: "It is written: He forsakes the ways of his own vineyard, and loses himself in the tracks of his own lands—such are the heresies which desert the Church, which is from the beginning."[4]

And again, "The serpent deceived Eve—Eve who was called Life. We at least must not transgress the commands by allowing ourselves to be deceived by the active perfidy of heresies."[5]

And once more, "There are three states of the soul—ignorance, opinion, knowledge. Those who are in ignorance are the Pagans, those in the knowledge (*ἐν τῇ ἐπιστήμῃ*) are the true Church, and those in opinion (*ἐν οἰήσει*) are the heretics."[1]

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[1] Harnack, *Dogmengeschichte*, vol. i., p. 403.

[2] Of the Church to which he has just alluded.

[3] *Stromat.*, i. 5.

[4] *Ibid.*, i. 19.

[5] *Ibid.*, iii. 12.

With regard to the unity of the Church, this ancient Father who, we are told, had "no conception of an anti-heretical Church" writes as follows:—

"The altar that is with us here—the earthly altar—is the congregation of those who devote themselves to prayer, having as it were one common voice and one mind. . . . The Church truly draws but one breath."[2]

We will allow ourselves one final quotation:

"Not having the key of entrance, but a false and counterfeit key, they do not enter in as we enter in, by drawing aside the curtain, that is the Tradition of the Lord, but by making an opening in the side, piercing clandestinely through the wall of the Church, and stepping over the truth, they constitute themselves the mystagogues of the souls of the impious. For it does not require many words to show that the human assemblies which they hold are posterior to the Catholic Church. . . . From what has been said, I hold it to have been made manifest that the True Church is One and that in it those are enrolled who are truly good, since, for this very reason that God is One, and the Lord is One, that which is in the highest degree venerable is praised because it is single, imitating in this its source which is One. The Church then has her lot with the nature of Unity which the heretics strive to divide into many heresies. Therefore in substance, in idea, in principle, in pre-eminence, we say that the ancient and Catholic Church is alone (*μόνην εἶναι φαμὲν τὴν ἀρχαίαν καὶ καθολικὴν ἐκκλησίαν*) in the Unity of the One Faith. . . . The pre-eminence of the Church as well as the principle of its constitution consists in this oneness. It surpasses all things else, and has nothing like or equal to itself."[1] It is of no merely local Church that Clement writes. He had travelled much, and before settling in Alexandria had visited Italy, Greece, and the Holy Land. It is of the Catholic Church, as he tells us expressly, that he writes, the Church which he had found everywhere, in three continents—"alone," "one," with a unity like to the unity of God, "according to the principle of her constitution," exclusive of heresy, "with nothing like or equal to herself."

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[1] *Stromat.*, vii. 16.

[2] *Pædagog.*, ii. 8.

Summary.

If, then, the purposes of our Lord in coming, as recorded in the Gospel, if the teaching of St. Paul, if the words of the first Fathers of the Church—some of them disciples of the Apostles—are to be taken into account, it is surely clear that the Church of Christ is by her very constitution and of her very nature everywhere One—One and dispersed throughout the world. If any religious body claim to be the Catholic Church, or "part of the Catholic Church," or the Church of Christ, to that religious body the question should be put "Are you at unity amongst yourselves—do you all teach and believe the same thing—one heart, one soul, one mouth, or are you divided amongst yourselves in questions of Faith; do you claim to be Everywhere, have you many tongues amongst you, but only one Faith, or are you as a matter of fact local, racial, confined practically to men of one speech? By questions such as these must each Church be judged, stand, or in the end fall. For, but one Church alone is divine and imperishable, the Church of "The Tradition," the heir of all the ages, that Church which manifestly is One, not divided, not merely national but Catholic.

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[1] *Stromat.*, vii. 17.

CHAPTER XVI

THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH

The Church Holy.

We read in the Nicene Creed that the Church of Christ is not only One and Catholic, but also Holy and Apostolic. That the Church is holy no Christian can doubt who reads the noble words of St. Paul: "Christ loved the Church and delivered Himself up for it, that He might sanctify it, cleansing it by the laver of water in the Word of Life, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that it should be holy and without blemish."[1]

But it always seems to me that it is difficult to employ the Note of Sanctity as a means of identifying the true Church, since, unhappily, Christians disagree so seriously as to wherein precisely sanctity consists. For example, the Catholic holds that the Church is holy because she teaches true doctrine, possesses and uses the seven Sacraments instituted by Christ, offers the Sacrifice of His Body and Blood for the living and the dead, provides those among her children who are called to the practice of the "Counsels of Perfection" with the means of following their vocation, and is the mother of all the Saints. A Catholic will know that no religious society is part of the true Church which fails in any point to teach the true doctrine—that is (as he believes) the Catholic Faith in its entirety—which has allowed even one of the seven Sacraments to fall into desuetude, which does not offer regularly and continuously the Sacrifice of the Mass, or which neglects to provide facilities for the Religious Life. But on the other hand, those who are not Catholics will (from their point of view, naturally enough) say that this is begging the whole question at issue. They will maintain that Catholic doctrine and practice, far from testifying to the sanctity of the Church are actually proof of its corruption, and show to what a distance it has departed from the Teaching of Christ.

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[1] Eph. v. 25-27.

Thus the previous question is raised, and I think raised with reason, for, until previous questions have been settled, I cannot see how the sanctity of the Church can be a means of identifying her, in the eyes of men who are not yet Catholics, as the true Church of Christ.

A Catholic may perhaps say: "Here is St. Francis. The Church which reared him in her bosom is evidently the One Holy Church of Christ, for Francis became all that he was, through being nurtured on her heavenly food. He may, however, at once be met with the rejoinder that St. Francis is not a type of heroic sanctity at all, and that if we would see a perfect type of Christian we should rather direct our attention to John Keble or to John Bunyan or, perhaps, to that worthy citizen St. Francis' father—a godfearing man who by no means neglected his religion on Sundays, but spent his week days for the most part in honest business, amassing money for those he was to leave behind him, when his place should know him no more—a good man no doubt, but by no means a Saint in the Catholic sense of that word.

Where, then, there exists a radical difference of view as to what exactly constitutes a Saint, and as to wherein Sanctity precisely consists, it seems hopeless to appeal to Sanctity as a means of discovering the True Church of Christ. Men differ among themselves as to the very definition of the term.[1]

The Church Apostolic.

So we will turn our attention to the fact that the True Church must be Apostolic. Here at least there is no ambiguity as to the meaning of the word, as used in the Creed. Any religious body that claims to be Apostolic must either have been founded by one of the Apostles, or must owe its existence to a Church that is itself of Apostolic origin. Examples of the first kind are the Churches of Rome and Malta, examples of the

[1] See, however, p. 186.

second are the Churches of Ireland and Germany. The Church in Malta was founded by St. Paul during his three months' residence in that Island after his shipwreck. The local tradition tells us that Publius who "entertained St. Paul and St. Luke 'courteously'[1] was its first Bishop. No one can suggest any moment when a strange doctrine other than that taught by St. Paul entered in—"another Gospel which is not another."[2] Here then we have an Apostolic Church. If you will learn the tradition of the Apostles, go to Malta and there you may find it and learn the Gospel which Paul preached.[3] Or, with even greater reason you may go to Rome, for there is the See of the Apostle Peter himself, on whom Christ built His Church—Rome where Paul together with Peter died for Christ—Rome whose Faith even from the beginning was "spoken of in the whole world"[4]—Rome whose list of Bishops was given by one Father after another as sufficient proof that those in communion with her belonged to the one True Church of Christ.[5] The See of Rome is *The* Apostolic See.

The Church of Malta.

The Church of Rome.

Rome and Malta are examples of churches founded by the Holy Apostles. For examples of churches founded indirectly by Apostles we may take the Churches of Ireland, Germany, and England. Ireland owes her faith to St. Patrick, sent to her shores by Pope St. Celestine. Germany owes her faith to St. Winfrid sent to her people by Pope St. Gregory the Second from the bosom of the Church in England which owed its own faith to the loving care of Pope St. Gregory the First. Thus the Churches in Ireland in Germany and in England were Apostolic in this sense that in each case they were indebted for their existence (like the Catholic Church in England now) to the Apostolic Church of Rome.

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[1] Acts xxviii. 1-11.

[2] Gal. i. 6, 7.

[3] Gal. i. 11.

[4] Rom. i. 8.

[5] *Cf.* pp. 314, 319, 320, 321.

Of Ireland, of Germany, of England.

Does it follow, we may ask, that a Church in Ireland, in Germany, in England to-day, which perhaps retains wholly or in part possession of the venerable sacred buildings of the ancient Church, and of its titles of honour, and of its endowments has *per se* still a right to the title Apostolic ? Not necessarily, by any means—even though the Apostolic succession in the Ministry may have been preserved, as, for example, it has been preserved in Holland by the Dutch Jansenists. For, if any such local Church, Apostolic in its origin, has broken away from the great world-wide Church (as, alas ! may too easily happen) then that local Church by the very fact forfeits its right to its old name, and is like a cuckoo in a nest that is not its own. If we would preserve unimpaired our right to the name Apostolic, we must persevere in "the Apostles'

A Church which has preserved the Apostolic Succession is not necessarily Apostolic.

doctrine and fellowship."[1] We must, that is, continue to believe what the Apostles believed and handed down, tolerating no novelties in religion, and we must continue in communion with the Apostolic Churches in other lands, making no schism.

Our origin will help us little, if we know in our hearts that our Fathers who brought us the Apostolic Faith from the Apostolic See would repudiate us to-day. The "Apostolic Succession" is a succession in "doctrine and fellowship" far more than a succession in officers.

No Church is Apostolic unless it was founded (directly or indirectly) by one of the Apostles of Christ, and unless it has maintained intact "the deposit" which it received in its beginning. The Apostolic heritage may be lost either by heresy—departing from the Apostles doctrine—or by schism—departing from the unity which they established—or (as is generally the case) by both.

A Church, then, which either has changed the Apostolic doctrine and left the Apostolic unity, deserting its "first love," or which was never founded by the Apostles at all, can have no right to the Apostolic name.

Churches which have received their present doctrine or form from men who were neither Apostles of Christ themselves nor sent from any Apostolic See, or who broke away from the Apostolic

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[1] Acts ii. 42.

See from which they had received their commission—men such as Arius or Nestorius or Eutyches or Luther or Cranmer—may be Arian or Nestorian or Eutychian or Lutheran or Anglican. Apostolic they cannot be, for their founders or "reformers" came too late. They were later than the Apostles.

The early Fathers of the Church always met the early heretics with this test, proving thus that they had departed from the Apostolic Unity.

St. Irenæus and the Apostolic Tradition and Succession,

For example, St. Irenæus writes:

"It is possible for all those who wish to see the truth, to behold in every Church the Tradition of the Apostles, which was manifested throughout the whole world, and we are able to enumerate the Bishops who were instituted by the Apostles and their successors to our own time."[1]

and on the See of Rome.

Having laid down this general principle, St. Irenæus proceeds that it would be too long to give the episcopal lists of all the Churches, but that it will be enough to recall the list of the Church which is the greatest, most ancient, and best known of all—that founded by the two glorious Apostles, Peter and Paul, the Church of Rome. He tells us that the Blessed Apostles, having founded and organised this Church, left its Government in the hands of Linus who was succeeded by Anacletus. He writes that the third to receive the episcopate after the Apostles was

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[1] *De Hær.*, iii. 3, 1.

Clement, who had heard the Apostles and conversed with them, who had heard the very sound of their preaching, and himself beheld their tradition. He continues his list until he comes to Eleutherius, who at the time when he wrote, occupied the Roman See.[1]

After this appeal to the witness of the Church of Rome, Irenæus sends his readers to the Church of Smyrna, which had received the Apostolic tradition from St. Polycarp who had been taught directly by the Apostles. Polycarp had handed down that which he had received to the Bishops who had succeeded him in his See. From the See of Smyrna—the Apostolic church of Asia—Irenæus tells us—those who dwell in Asia may learn the truth.

and the See of Smyrna.

From Irenæus we may turn to Tertullian. Tertullian was by birth a Carthaginian who wrote Greek and Latin fluently. Unhappily, before his death he proved false to his own principles, embraced the party of the New Prophecy, rebelled against Rome, passed over to the Montanist sect and ended his days in isolation and obscurity. But whilst still a Catholic he wrote, at the very end of the second century, a Treatise entitled *De Præscriptionibus Hæreticorum* which lays down, with the greatest force and incisiveness, the Apostolic character of the true Church.

Tertullian and Heresy.

Tertullian tells us that "very many persons are scandalised by the fact that heresies are flourishing greatly," and asks the question:

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[1] *De Hær.*, iii. 2, 3.

"If then a bishop, if a deacon, if a widow, if a virgin, if a doctor, if even a martyr shall have fallen away from the Rule [of Faith], (*lapsus a Regula fuerit*) does it follow that on this account heresies are true?"[1] Surely not, for we must not judge the Faith by the persons who betray it. The wind carries off the chaff. The corn that remains is all the purer. "However, heretics may, and actually do, object that, after all, the Rule of Faith is not everything, since there are also Scriptures that are sources of faith, and they base their disputations on the Scriptures. But this is precisely what we must not allow them to do, first because the Apostle Paul forbids us to have any discussion with heretics, secondly because with the heretics of to-day, no one knows what Scriptures they accept, what text they read or, what interpretation they give. You will gain nothing at all from discussion, and the Faithful whom you intend to enlighten by disputing before them with the heretics, will go away more uncertain than before. It is most unprofitable to discuss the contents of the Scriptures, in which there lies no hope of victory, or one that is doubtful or practically doubtful (*in quibus aut nulla, aut incerta, victoria est aut par incertæ*). One question only must be asked: to whom does the deposit of the Faith, to whom does the deposit of the Scriptures belong?" The answer to this question must be an answer of *fact*. But what is alone of importance is the fact that, when here below, our Lord *taught*, and that amongst His disciples he chose twelve men, whom He destined to be the Teachers of the Nations, and sent to the nations with His authority.[1] Now, these "Apostles preached Faith in Jesus Christ first in Judæa, and there founded Churches; afterwards they went into the world and promulgated to the nations the same teaching of the same Faith. Struggling, they founded Churches in every city, from which other Churches borrowed and are still borrowing every day the germ of faith and the seed of doctrine, so that they may become Churches. And on this account are they too called Apostolic because they are the offspring of Apostolic Churches. Every kind of thing must be referred to its type (*omne genus ad originem suam censeatur necesse est*). Therefore there are so many Churches and they are so great, but there is one first Church founded by the Apostles from which all the others have sprung. So all are the first Church and all are Apostolic, provided that together they all show forth unity—provided that there is one communion of peace between them, and one common name of brotherhood, and the seal of hospitality."[2]

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[1] *Præscrip.*, iii.

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[1] *Præscrip.*, 14, *cf. De Anima.* I have availed myself of the summary of M. Batiffol (*Primitive Catholicism*, p. 267).

[2] *Præscrip.*, 20.

Later on Tertullian sums up his whole contention in the sentence: "The Churches have received their teaching from the Apostles, the Apostles from Christ, Christ from God."[1] This teaching is a Tradition. It is far more ancient than any heresy whatsoever.[2] It was in possession long before men spoke of Marcion the Stoic, or of Valentinus the Platonist.[3] "Now, it is self-evident that what was first handed down (*traditum*) comes from the Lord and is true, whereas what appeared later is foreign and false."[4] The priority of the Catholic Tradition is vouched for by the fact that the Apostolic Churches prove that they truly come down from the Apostles. Smyrna claims Polycarp who was put there by John, Rome claims Clement who was put there by Peter. "Let then the heretics show us the origin of their churches, let them give us the lists of their bishops from the beginning so that their first bishop may be seen to have had as the Founder of his see and his predecessor one of the Apostles, or of the Apostolic men who persevered with the Apostles. For this is the manner in which the Apostolic Churches produce their lists."[5] Tertullian concludes as follows:

"If then it be the case that truth be adjudged to us, whoever we are, who walk in that Rule which the Church has handed down from the Apostles, the Apostles from Christ, and Christ from God, it follows that our proposition stands firm asserting (*definientis*) that heretics must not be allowed to make any appeal to the contents of the Scriptures."[1]

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[1] *Præscrip.*, 21.
[2] *Ibid.*, 29.
[3] *Ibid.*, 30.
[4] *Ibid.*, 31.
[5] *Ibid.*, 31.

Irenæus and Tertullian made their appeal to the list of Bishops in various Apostolic Churches, choosing the succession at Rome as a sample. In the second century such Sees were numerous, and reference to the teaching at Smyrna, for example, was obviously easier for those who lived near Smyrna than was a visit to Rome. But by the fourth century the prestige of other Apostolic Sees was gradually waning and during the controversy with the Donatist heresy in Africa we find St. Optatus of Milevis and St. Augustine of Hippo appealing simply to the Roman See. St. Irenæus had already said "with this See it is necessary that every church should agree,"[2] because of its more powerful headship.

The Roman See was the Chair (Cathedra) of Peter.

St. Optatus and the Apostolic See of Rome.

St. Optatus reminded the Donatists that on this account alone anyone who should desert the Church of Rome would be thereby a schismatic and a sinner, for the whole [Catholic] world was in communion with its Bishop. This communion with Rome is for him the simplest, and the decisive, test as to whether any Church is, or is not Apostolic. He writes that the Church has certain endowments (*Dotes*, as we should say, Marks) and that the first of these is the Cathedra. We will give his own words.

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[1] *Præscrip.*, 37.

[2] Or perhaps "have recourse to." We only have the words of St. Irenæus in a Latin translation of the original Greek "Ad hanc enim Ecclesiam (Romanam) propter potentiorem principalitatem necesse est omnem convenire Ecclesiam, hoc est eos qui sunt undique Fideles" (*Adv. Hæret.*, iii. 3).

"The first of the endowments is the Cathedra, on which Peter was the first to sit. To him succeeded Linus."

Optatus proceeds to give a list of the Bishops of Rome, as Irenæus and Tertullian had done before him, and when he comes to the name of Siricius, the Pope of the day, he adds, "With this Siricius the whole [Catholic] world agrees in one communion" (in una communionis societate concordat).

On the other hand he warns Parmenian, his Donatist adversary:

"You cannot deny that you know that in the city of Rome the episcopal Cathedra was conferred on Peter first, in order that in this one Cathedra unity might be observed by all, lest the other Apostle might claim separate cathedras each one for himself, so that he that might set up another against this one Cathedra, should be at once a schismatic and a sinner."[1]

St. Augustine and the Donatists.

St. Augustine likewise gives a list of the Bishops of Rome, continuing it to his own day,[2] and makes the following appeal to the Donatists:

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[1] *Cont. Donat.*, ii. 2, 3.

[2] *Epist.*, liii. 2. *Cf. Epist.*, xliv. 3; xlix. 2.

"Come oh my brothers, if you will be grafted upon the Vine. It grieves me to see you lying there cut off. Number the Bishops from the very See of Peter, and in that order of Fathers observe who came after whom in the order of succession."[1]

For himself St. Augustine writes simply: "I am held in the communion of the Catholic Church by the succession of Bishops from the Chair of Peter the Apostle to whom the Lord commended His sheep to be fed, up to the present Episcopate."[2]

No Apostolic See now in existence save the See of Rome.

At the present day, no Apostolic See can be consulted by those who would learn the truth, save the See of Rome. Christians in Jerusalem belong to other lands than Palestine, and are in no special sense the heirs of the Tradition handed down by James the first Bishop of the Holy City. Nor is modern Jerusalem in any true sense the same city as that which, in accordance with the prophecy of Christ, was destroyed under Titus. We have here merely a continuity of site. Ephesus, the See of John, is but a name. Antioch has long since become Nestorian, and Alexandria Monophysite. Constantinople is not Apostolic in origin. Of the Thrones upon which Apostles sat none but Rome remains, but Rome suffices.

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[1] *Ps. cont. partes Donati.*, Str. 18.

[2] *Cont. Ep. Manich. quam vocant Fundam.*, iv. 5.

St. Augustine and that See.

"I think," wrote Augustine to Julian of Eclanum, "that part of the world ought to suffice for thee, in which the Lord willed to crown the First of the Apostles with a most glorious Martyrdom."[1]

What was enough for St. Augustine is surely enough for us. Others may pass away, but Rome remains eternal, the unfailing witness to the fulfilment of the Promises of Christ.

So when we come to apply the test and ask whether any church is truly Apostolic, it is a matter of extreme simplicity. "Has it the Cathedra?" we may ask with Optatus, that is to say: "Is it in communion with the Bishop of Rome?"[2] Every Church has a right to the Apostolic name, which is joined in "doctrine and fellowship" with the Apostolic See of Peter, "to whom," as St. Augustine reminds us, "the Lord commended His sheep, to be fed, up to the present Episcopate."[3] Any Church not in communion with "the Chair of the Roman Church on which Peter sat and on which Anastasius [Benedict] sits to-day,"[4] either never possessed, or unhappily has lost, the right to the Apostolic name and heritage.

Thus do we come to our conclusion. When we say that the Church is One, we mean that she is

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[1] *Cont. Julianum*, i. 13.

[2] *Cont. Donat.*, ii. 3, 9.

[3] *Cont. Ep. Manich. quam vocant Fundam.*, iv. 5.

[4] *Con. Litt. Petil.*, ii. 51.

Conclusion of the matter.

not divided within herself but possesses one faith, one worship, one ecclesiastical government; when we say that she is Catholic, we mean that she is not merely national but world wide in her unity; when we say that she is Apostolic, we mean that she is not modern but ancient.

In this manner are we "built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief Corner-stone;"[1] built upon the Prophets, since the accomplishment of their prophecies proves that Mary's Son is the Lord who is Himself the fulfilment of the Law and the Prophets; built upon the Apostles, since they received from the Lord His Divine teaching to be handed down, through all the ages, in His Church. He Himself is the chief Corner-stone: "Other foundation can no man lay than that which has been laid, which is Christ Jesus;"[2] yet He deigned to associate with Himself in the building of His Church another—the Head and Prince of His Apostles—the one Apostle to whom He said: "Thou art a Rock, and upon this Rock I will build My Church, and the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it, unto thee will I give the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven." In this Promise of Christ we have our guarantee that His Divine Teaching shall never be lost, nor changed—shall never be corrupted, in that Church which He built on Peter. So long as we abide in the Church of Christ—One, Catholic, Apostolic—we shall remain in possession of that supernatural Truth, which God committed to Christ in His Humanity, which Christ committed to the Apostles, and the Apostles committed to the Church.

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[1] Eph. ii. 20.

[2] 1 Cor. iii. 11.

Once more let me quote words of St. Augustine: "I am held in the communion of the Catholic Church by the succession of Bishops from the very Chair of Peter the Apostle . . . lastly I am held by the very name of Catholic, which, not without cause amid so many heresies, this Church has alone retained, so that although all heretics wish themselves to be called Catholics, yet, if any stranger should ask them where the Catholics must worship, not one of the heretics would venture to point out his own temple or house."[1]

It comes to this. The Church of Christ was to be undivided like a Kingdom, unbroken like a net—consequently it must be ONE; the Church of Christ was to bring the Gospel to "all nations"—consequently it must be Catholic—that is WORLD-WIDE; the Church of Christ was built on the Rock of Peter and founded on the Apostles—consequently it must be APOSTOLIC. To this One, Catholic, Apostolic Church, and to this Church alone, has been entrusted the custody of the Word of God, and the interpretation thereof—the Word of God, which is the divine Revelation made to mankind by Jesus Christ our

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[1] *Cont. Ep. Manich. quam vocant Fundam.*, xiv. 5.

Lord. If then we would learn with certainty the meaning of the Teaching of Christ, we must seek it from the Church which He founded and which is the heir of His Promises. This Church is that which is known amongst men to-day as "*The Roman Catholic Church,*" for the Roman Catholic Church alone is One—and World-wide—and in union with the Apostolic See of Peter. Her circumference is the world; the centre of her Unity is Rome.

CHAPTER XVII

THE VOICE OF THE CHURCH

WE have seen that Christianity is a body of doctrine which requires to be taught. It consists of a number of revealed truths, closely connected with, and interdependent upon, one another, often termed *The Faith*. It takes the form of definite statements, which after they have been presented to the understanding, must be either accepted or rejected by the will of each individual. It is called, and it truly is, the Word of Christ—the Word of God, for it is a divine Revelation. Moreover, our Lord has entrusted this His Word, as a Deposit or sacred Trust, to the keeping of His One Catholic Church, which He built upon His Apostle Peter, that she may guard, develop, hand down and teach it to His people, free from any admixture of error to the end of time.

The Church the Deposit of Truth.

From the Church, then, we may securely learn those supernatural truths, which God has made known, to our soul's welfare. The question remains to be examined: *In what manner* does the Church exercise her office of delivering to men the Divine Word? *Through what channels* does she speak to those who would fain listen to Her Voice?

The Vatican Council answers this question, reminding us that "all those things are to be believed . . . which are proposed to us by the Church *either by a solemn Judgement, or by her ordinary and universal authoritative Teaching* (magisterium), to be believed as having been revealed by God."[1]

We are referred here firstly to that which is exceptional, any solemn Judgement of the Church, and secondly to that which is of everyday occurrence, her ordinary Teaching.

(I.) *The exceptional Teaching of the Church* is to be found in the definitions of revealed doctrine whether issuing from her Œcumenical Councils, or from the Successors of St. Peter teaching *ex cathedra*—also in her approved Creeds or Professions of Faith.

The Ecclesia Docens and Ecclesia Discens.

Before going further, it may be well to recall the distinction between the *Ecclesia Docens*, or the Church that teaches, and the *Ecclesia Discens*, or the Church that is taught. Very often the same individual may in his official capacity belong to the Church that teaches, whilst in his private capacity he belongs to the Church that is taught. For example, a Bishop or a Pope when declaring the

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[1] *De Fide*, sess. 3, cap. iii.

Faith, does so as a member of the *Ecclesia Docens;* when however he submits his own mind to the Mystery which he has just taught officially—he is in this personal act a member of the *Ecclesia Discens*. By his submission of the intellect he, like a layman, acquires merit and pleases God. St. Paul when he taught with authority that which he had "received"[1] was one man; he was yet another when he cried out "I know in whom *I* have believed. He will render unto *me* a crown of justice, as unto all those who love His coming."[2]

Now this distinction between teachers and taught is very clear in the New Testament. In the Gospels we find that our Lord, at the very beginning of His Public Ministry, chose and called to His side disciples; that from amongst them "He chose Twelve, whom He called Apostles";[3] that of these Apostles one was called the *First*,[4] Simon, to whom He promised the new name of Peter, which He subsequently conferred upon him under special circumstances of great solemnity; that first to Peter, and then to all the Apostles together, He gave the power of governing His Church under the figure of binding and loosing; that He promised to send His Holy Spirit to the Apostles to abide with them for ever; that after His Resurrection He sent these

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[1] 1 Cor. xi. 23.

[2] 2 Tim. i. 12; iv. 8.

[3] Matt. x. 2-4; Mark iii. 13, 14; Luke vi. 12, 13.

[4] Matt. x. 2.

Apostles into the world, "even as" he had been sent by the Father, at the same time breathing upon them, saying to them " Receive ye the Holy Ghost," and bestowing upon them the power of forgiving and "retaining" the sins of their fellow-men; that having declared that "all power had been given Him in Heaven and upon earth," He commissioned His Apostles to " teach all nations," and to " baptize them in the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost," promising that He Himself "would be with them all days, even to the end of the world."

Christ gave the Apostles Authority.

From a consideration of such passages as these we see that Christ gave the Apostles authority to teach, to govern the Church, to baptize and to forgive sins; we notice also that He promised that His Holy Spirit should abide with them, not merely for their lifetime, but "for ever," and that He declared that He Himself would be with them "all days even to the end of the world." From these passages we deduce with certainty that the Apostolic office is to continue in some way in the Church after the death of the last Apostle, and that the Divine assistance will never be lacking to the Teaching Church. Nor are we surprised not only to see the Apostolic College exercising undisputed authority after the Ascension of Christ, but also to find St. Paul recognising the distinction between the teachers and the taught, independently of the actual Apostles of the Lord. For example, in the First Epistle to the Thessalonians (a letter which is probably earlier in date than any of the Gospels) he writes thus: "We beseech you, brethren, to esteem more abundantly in charity for their works' sake, and to have peace with, those who labour among you, and are over you in the Lord (*τοῦς προϊσταμένους ὑμῶν ἐν Κυρίῳ*) and admonish you."[1] And in the inscription of the Epistle to the Philippians we read: "Paul and Timothy, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus, who are at Philippi, and to the Bishops and Deacons, grace and peace."[2] By the Saints are meant the Faithful in general. The word Saint or holy (*ἅγιος* literally = *consecrated*) was up to the middle of the second century applied not, as now, to the Church alone, regarded as the Body of Christ, but to all her members individually.[3] Now, at Philippi there were not only the Faithful, but also, distinguished from them, Deacons and "Bishops." The Deacons (*διάκονοι*) ministered to them, but the "Bishops," as the name (*ἐπίσκοπος*) involves, were their overseers, ruled them. And thus at Ephesus St. Paul told Bishops, in set terms, that "the Holy Ghost had placed them to *rule* [as Shepherds]

Bishops and Deacons.

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[1] 1 Thess. v. 12, 13.

[2] Philip. i. 1, 2.

[3] It is borrowed from the Old Testament in which Israel is regarded as a holy nation, and the Israelites are called saints because they belong to God (Exod. xix. 6; Deut. vii. 6). *A fortiori* this should be true under the New Law.

(ποιμαίνειν) the Church of God, which He hath purchased with His Own Blood." The teaching office—the office of guiding the Flock of Christ, as a shepherd guides his sheep—was, clearly, to continue in the Church after the death of the Apostles, for it was exercised, subject to the Apostles, even during their lifetime, by other Teachers, called Episcopal. "A Bishop," writes St. Paul to Titus, "must, as the steward of God . . . embrace that true Word which is in accordance with *The* Teaching (κατὰ τὴν διδαχήν)[1] that he may be able both to exhort in *The* health-giving Doctrine (ἐν τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ τῇ ὑγιαινούσῃ) and to confute those who oppose him, for there are many who use foolish words (ματαιολόγοι)[2] and are disobedient, who must be reproved."[3]

Those then who do not heed the Teaching of the Bishop, in contradicting him "use foolish words, are disobedient and must be reproved."[4] We have here the *Ecclesia Docens* before our eyes. It is futile for anyone to say that he wishes to be taught by the Church as an abstraction, something in the air, or that he reverences and listens to the Church of the past, unless he is ready to be taught by the Church of the present, submitting himself obediently to her authoritative officers in that time in which he lives. This—and this alone—is "to hear the Church."[1]

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[1] ἡ διδάχη and ἡ διδασκαλία (note the definite article) are here synonyms for ἡ παράδοσις or The Tradition (2 Thess. ii. 14; *cf.* 1 Cor. xi. 2, etc.), and ἡ πίστις or The Faith.

[2] Those who oppose the authoritative teaching of the Bishop are simply described as ματαιολόγοι, that is, foolish, empty talkers.

[3] Titus i. 7, 10.

[4] The distinction between Teachers and Taught in the Church is unaffected by the question as to the exact meaning of the word ἐπίσκοπος in these passages.

"Jesus Christ," wrote St. Ignatius of Antioch, himself a disciple of the Apostles, "is the Mind of the Father, even as the Bishops who are settled in the furthest parts of the world (*οἱ κατὰ τὰ πέρατα ὁρισθέντες*) are the Mind of Jesus Christ."[2]

And this at the very beginning of the second century. (St. Ignatius died for the Faith A.D. 114.)

The Apostolic College continued by the Bishops.

It is the Catholic Doctrine that, in the exercise of the Teaching Office, the College of Catholic Bishops throughout the world has succeeded to the College of the Apostles, and that the Bishop of Rome, who is the First of all Bishops, has succeeded St. Peter, who was the First of all the Apostles.

If the Apostolic College was not to die with the Apostles, it is hard to see how anyone can imagine that the Petrine Office was to die with St. Peter. Throughout the Gospels we find St. Peter separated from the rest. It is "Peter and the Eleven";[3] "Peter and the Apostles";[4] "Go tell His disciples and Peter."[5] To Peter, as we have seen, first was given the power to bind and to loose; to Peter alone were promised the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven; he alone is the Rock upon which the Church is built; out of his boat Christ taught; for him alone with Christ was the tribute money paid: "Take this and give it to them for Me and for thee";[1] for him alone Christ prayed that he might confirm his brethren when tempted by the Evil One;[2] to his pastoral care alone Christ explicitly committed His Flock—both sheep and lambs—before His own Ascension upon high."[3]

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[1] Matt. xviii. 17.

[2] Eph. iii. 2.

[3] Acts ii. 14.

[4] Acts v. 29.

[5] Mark xvi. 7.

"One is the Church," wrote St. Cyprian in the third century, "founded by Christ our Lord upon Peter as the origin and principle of its unity[4] (origine unitatis et ratione). And again, "The Lord gave this power first to Peter, upon whom He built the Church, whereby He instituted and exhibited the origin of its unity."[5] "One is chosen amongst the Twelve," writes St. Jerome, "that by the institution of a Head, any opportunity for schism might be taken away."[6]

The position of Peter.

With these Scripture texts and patristic principles present to our minds, it should not be difficult to accept the Teaching of the Catholic Church that the solitary position of St. Peter was, according to the Will of God, to be held by Peter's successor in the Roman See. If the Church was to be, as Cyprian assures us, from the beginning, through Peter "instituted and exhibited" in unity, through Peter in unity it should continue. For this purpose not only had "a Head to be chosen amongst the Twelve, that by the institution of a Head any opportunity of schism might be taken away," but even more necessary was it that a Head should still remain amongst all Bishops during the long centuries that were to follow.

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[1] Matt. xvii. 24, 26.

[2] Luke xxii. 32.

[3] John xxi. 15, 16.

[4] *Ep.*, lxx. 3.

[5] *Ep.*, lxiii. 3.

[6] *Adv. Jovin.*, i. 26.

To Peter's unique position was to succeed that which St. Optatus terms the Unique (unica et singularis Cathedra) Chair of the Roman Bishop, who in every age is Peter's Successor.[1]

The Chair of Peter is the visible centre of the Church's visible unity. This unity is effected through the solemn teaching that proceeds, when need arises, from that Chair of Truth. "Peter hath spoken by Leo," cried the assembled Episcopate at the Œcumenical Council of Chalcedon: nor can any instance be adduced from ecclesiastical history where the Church turned a deaf ear to the *Ex Cathedra* Teaching of the Roman Bishop. The Universal Church has ever known well that, in the words of St. Jerome: "the Roman Faith praised by the words of the Apostle, can suffer no change."[2]

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[1] *Cont. Donat.*, ii. 2. *Cf.* p. 320.

[2] *Apolog.*, iii., *Contra Rufin.*

The position of Bishops.

It is, however, sometimes objected that the position of Bishops in the Catholic Church to-day in relation to the Pope is dissimilar to the position of the Apostles in relation to their Prince. But surely this should not surprise us. It is a truth accepted, I suppose, by Protestants as well as by Catholics, that each Apostle was infallible in his official teaching, and possessed world-wide jurisdiction. No one would claim to-day infallibility in teaching for any Bishop (save one) considered individually, nor does any Bishop (save one) claim world-wide jurisdiction. Consequently it follows that no individual Bishop (save one) is, standing alone, *in the most comprehensive sense* a successor of any Apostle. Therefore we should not expect to find the relations of any individual Bishop with the successor of St. Peter, strictly similar to the relations of another Apostle with St. Peter himself. For no one claims that the position of any Bishop to-day (excepting the position of the Bishop of Rome) is strictly similar to that of one of the Twelve, or to that of Paul and Barnabas. But it *is* true that the position of *the College of Catholic Bishops regarded as a whole in relation to their visible Head is strictly similar to that of the College of Apostles in relation to St. Peter.* On the one hand we never find in the New Testament the College of Apostles acting independently of Peter; on the other hand, the College of Catholic Bishops in union with the Successor of Peter again and again have taught the Catholic world with Apostolic authority, echoing the words of the Council at Jerusalem: "It hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to Us."

To "Peter and the Apostles" have naturally and inevitably succeeded "The Pope and the Bishops" in the Church to-day. They constitute the *Ecclesia Docens.*

When, then, the Successor of St. Peter "defines *ex cathedra* . . . a doctrine concerning Faith or Morals to be held by the Universal Church;"[1] or when the Catholic Episcopate, in union with its Head, assembled in Œcumenical Council, defines such a doctrine, we know that, in virtue of the assistance promised by Christ to Peter and the Apostles "to the consummation of the world,"[2] this doctrine is true, and part of the Deposit of Faith, really belonging (at least implicitly) to the Apostolic Tradition "once delivered to the Saints."[3] The same must be held with regard to the Creeds and Professions of Faith regarded as authoritative by the Church.

A Creed is a summary of revealed Truth, which we accept on the authority of the Church. It serves three main purposes:

A Creed and its purpose.

1. That those who teach the Faith all over the world may employ the same formula, so that

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[1] Council of the Vatican, sess. iv., cap. 4.

[2] Matt. xxviii. 20.

[3] Jude 3.

by this means the Unity of the Faith may be the more easily and the more effectively preserved.

2. That those who learn may be able to commit to memory and often recite a summary of the great truths, by which their faith may be strengthened and increased.

3. That by this means the Faithful may be warned against the heresies which the Creeds condemn.

The Catholic Church possesses three principal Creeds.

The Apostles' Creed.

1. *The Apostles' Creed.* This is generally believed to be the ancient baptismal formula of the Roman Church, which contained the great articles of Faith in which catechumens were required by the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul to profess their Faith before Baptism. Probably, however, it was amplified by new articles to meet successive heresies, and did not reach its present form until the fifth century. For example, the statement, "I believe in the Communion of Saints" was in all probability inserted to condemn the Jovinian and Helvidian heresies, which denied the lawfulness of the Invocation of the Saints.

The Nicene Creed.

2. *The Nicene Creed.* This Creed was begun by the Council of Nicæa (A.D. 325), which in order expressly to condemn the Arian heresy, added to the Apostles' Creed the words, "And in One Jesus Christ our Lord . . . consubstantial with the Father, by Whom all things in Heaven

and on earth were made." It was continued by the Council of Constantinople (A.D. 381), where words were added to express the Divinity of the Holy Ghost in condemnation of the Macedonian heresy; approved by the Council of Ephesus, (A.D. 431); and finally completed by the word *Filioque*, (who proceedeth from the Father *and the Son*), which was added in Spain in the sixth century. This addition, necessary in order to make the Catholic Doctrine, which had been questioned on the subject, explicit, was not approved by the Holy See until the ninth century, when permission was given for it to be sung in this form in the Mass. The addition was accepted by the Greeks in the Second Council of Lyons and the Council of Florence.

The Athanasian Creed.

3. *The Athanasian Creed.* This Creed is so-called from the fact that for some time it was attributed to St. Athanasius. It is not, however, to be found amongst his genuine works, and we do not hear of it before the Council of Toledo in the year 633. It is generally believed to have been composed in Spain or Southern Gaul in the fifth or sixth century. Whatever its origin, it has been accepted by the Church and incorporated in the Breviary.

In addition to the Three Creeds, we have three later Professions of Faith.

1. The Tridentine Profession of Faith, sometimes called the creed of Pope Pius the Fourth, gives us a

summary of the definitions of the Council of Trent (A.D. 1564) against the recent Protestant heresies.

2. The Profession of Faith prescribed for the Greeks by Pope Gregory the Thirteenth (A.D. 1575).

3. The Profession of Faith prescribed by Pope Urban the Eighth and Pope Benedict the Fourteenth for Orientals (A.D. 1743).

This then is the Formal Teaching of the Church—Teaching which comes to her children from the *ex Cathedra* definitions of the Successor of St. Peter, or from her Bishops collectively, or has been embodied in some written Profession of Faith, which she has made her own—Teaching which has often arisen from the necessity of condemning some new heresy—Teaching which has become as it were a sign-post, a fixed, immutable presentation of the Tradition which she received from the Apostles, and the Apostles from our Lord.

We pass to the consideration of

(II.) *The ordinary everyday Teaching of the Church.* This Teaching is given pre-eminently by the Bishop.

The ordinary teaching of the Church.

As the Pope represents the *Ecclesia Docens* for the whole of Christendom, so does each Bishop for his own Diocese. Though he is not infallible, and though in various crises of the Church's history Bishops have fallen away from the Faith, still, normally, the Bishop for his own people is the Vicar of Christ. His jurisdiction and his right to teach is " ordinary," not delegated. This teaching power, since he cannot himself exercise it personally in all parts of his diocese, a Bishop is accustomed to delegate to priests, who teach with his permission and by his authority.

In practice, the Faithful will learn their religion from their parish priest, his assistants, and also from their parents and school-teachers (whether "Religious" or Layfolk), all of whom, when they teach the Word of God, have their part in the commission which first devolved upon the Church when the solemn words were spoken to Simon Peter : " Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me ? Feed My sheep, feed My lambs." In his measure and degree every authorised teacher of the Catholic Doctrine shares in Peter's Burden.

Now, this Catholic Doctrine is something very definite and very living. We do not think of it primarily as it existed in the second or the fourth or the fifth, or even in the first century, but as something with which we have to deal to-day in the actual present, possibly as teachers, certainly as disciples. No man can give me a reason for obeying the Council of Ephesus, which will not equally oblige me to obey the Council of the Vatican. No man can explain to me why those who lived in Crete and disobeyed Titus should be termed " users of empty words" and had to be "reproved," unless I also should be a user of empty words, and unless I should also be "reproved," were I, living possibly in London, north of the Thames, so unhappy as to contradict or disobey the Archbishop of Westminster to-day.

Appeal to History.

The study of history, especially of ecclesiastical history, is much to be commended, but any appeal to history, which means an appeal to my particular view of history—any appeal away from the Voice of the Church at the present hour back to a dead past, must always be, as Cardinal Manning so concisely expressed it, an act of Treason. Within the Church, I can lawfully, if I think that I have due cause, appeal from the lower authority to the higher, from my parish priest to my Bishop, even from my Bishop to Peter's Chair, but when the Church speaks to me authoritatively—when I know that my parish priest, or my Bishop is but delivering to me the authorized Teaching of the Church, then an appeal to my private view of history is but a treasonable appeal to my own fallible opinion against that Church to which Christ has given His Promise that the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against her. In other words, it is an appeal to my private judgement against the Promises of Christ—against Christ Himself. And this, in the case of a Catholic Christian, falls in no way short of treason.

The Catholic Doctrine which is the subject-matter of the ordinary Teaching of the Church is, (as I have said so often in the course of this book), nothing else than the Word of God. Her knowledge of this

Catholic Doctrine no other than the Word of God.

Divine Word comes to her not only from the authoritative definitions of Popes and Councils, and from her Creeds. She derives it also from the Teaching of her ancient Fathers, from her Liturgical Books, and from the sense (or traditional belief) of her Faithful people. By the *Fathers of the Church* we mean certain ecclesiastical writers of the early centuries, conspicuous for their learning and sanctity, whose writings the Church holds in veneration. The greatest of these Holy Fathers are called Doctors, that is, not merely Doctors *in* the Church, but Doctors *of* the Church. Of these, eight are known as the Great Doctors—four in the West, and four in the East. In the West, Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine and Pope Gregory the Great; in the East, Athanasius, Basil, Gregory Nazianzen and John Chrysostom. There are also certain very early writers, whose orthodoxy is suspect (such as Origen), or who did not persevere in the Catholic Faith (such as Tertullian), whose testimony is of very high value as to the Teaching of the Church in their time, even though unhappily they may have themselves at some time repudiated that teaching. Thus from Tertullian, writing in his heretical days, we learn that Pope Callistus in the second century claimed to forgive even the most enormous sins in virtue of the powers of the Keys which he had received as successor of St. Peter in the See of Rome.[1]

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[1] *De Pudicitia*, xxi. 9.

Testimony of the Fathers.

The Fathers of the Church may be regarded from a twofold point of view. They are *private Teachers,* and as such their teaching should always be listened to with deep respect in consequence of their learning and sanctity; they are also *witnesses to the Tradition of the Church,* and in this capacity it is evident that their authority carries very great weight indeed. It is therefore certain that if we find the Fathers, with practical unanimity, declaring—in this bearing witness to the Tradition of their respective churches—that any doctrine has been revealed by God, or has been received by the Universal Church, or cannot be denied without shipwreck of the Faith, we dare not on such a subject neglect their testimony. Moreover, the Council of the Vatican, repeating the teaching of the Creed of Pope Pius the Fourth, warns us that it is not lawful to interpret any passage of Holy Scripture against the unanimous consent of the Fathers. For example, even before the Church had solemnly condemned the Lutheran heresy of Justification by Faith only, it would not have been permitted, against the unanimous agreement of the Fathers, to interpret certain passages in the Epistles of St. Paul, as though adult Christians could be justified and attain salvation without the doing of good works.

It is manifest that though the writings of the Fathers will always be of the greatest interest to

Catholics, and of the greatest importance for the defence of the Faith, it is not so necessary to appeal to their authority at the present time, in order thereby to settle disputed points of controversy, as was the case in the days before the rise of multiform heresies had caused the Church to multiply her definitions of doctrine. Moreover, we must always bear in mind that if the Holy Scriptures need a living interpreter, so even more do the writings of the Fathers, vast as they are in bulk, and ranging over an enormous field. Besides the Fathers were not inspired, and not one of them—unless he be a Pope expressly teaching the Church—is infallible in his writings. If anyone will even glance at the volumes of Migne upon the shelves of a library, he will understand how futile and how pathetic is the appeal of some modern High Churchmen to the Bible, not as interpreted by the living Church, but by "the Fathers." The Fathers themselves had their disputes, and in such disputes, like Catholics in every age, they submitted gladly to the Judgement of the Church, to which alone, in questions of doubt, they ever made their appeal.

We may also learn the Catholic Doctrine from the Liturgical Books of the Catholic Church, according to the saying *Lex supplicandi lex credendi.* For example, when in the various Liturgies we are instructed to adore the Blessed Sacrament, we are thereby taught the doctrine of the Real Presence from which, of necessity, Eucharistic Adoration springs.

The Teaching Church.

The Church, then, has the Teaching of the Apostolic See and of her Bishops throughout the world; she has her Ancient Fathers; she has her Liturgical Books. She possesses also her Faithful People. Whatever may be the truth of the saying *Vox Populi, Vox Dei* in secular politics, there can be no doubt that in ecclesiastical history again and again the Voice of the People has been the Voice of God. So much so that St. Hilary, seeing Bishops falling into Arianism whilst the Catholic masses resented their heresy and stopped their ears, did not hesitate to write "The ears of the people are more holy than are the hearts of their Bishops."[1] Not that the people are the judges of their Bishops—to say this would be to contradict the whole teaching of Antiquity—but that in those exceptional cases where Bishops fall away from the Church, the people remain, at least for a while, faithful, and instinctively resent heretical novelties in doctrine. It was so in the case of Arianism; it was so when Nestorius, Patriarch of the great See of Constantinople, denied that Mary was rightly termed Mother of God—the people would have none of it, stopped their ears in horror, and joyfully acclaimed the Catholic Teaching; it was so under Henry the

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[1] *Contra Auxentium*, 6.

Eighth in England and Wales, when alas! Bishops fell away through cowardice and worldliness, and the people remained faithful to the Ancient Faith. The English and Welsh people never gave up their religion. It was persecution only, accompanied by lack of priests throughout the land, that stole their children's heritage.

Undefined Doctrines.

During a short period, when the Doctrine of the Immaculate Conception had not yet been defined, and whilst it was under much discussion in all its bearings, a considerable portion of the great Dominican Order inclined to the opinion that our Lady had been sanctified not in the first, but in the second, moment of her existence. At this period some Franciscans happened to erect a new church, and placed over the portico the inscription "To Mary conceived without Sin." Whereupon certain Dominicans who lived in the neighbourhood approached the Pope of the time with a complaint: "Was it lawful thus to anticipate the supreme Judgement of the Holy See on a question that was still under discussion?" The Pope smiled and replied: "Do *you* too build a church, and place over the portico: 'To Mary conceived in Sin,' and let us see how long the people will let it stand!" Theologians might ventilate a question scientifically, and discuss it under all its aspects, but never at any period of the Church's history would the Faithful people have tolerated the thought that the empire of Satan ever had access to the soul of the Holy Mother of their God. Thus the people, ever retentive of the traditions of their Fathers, ever jealous of innovation, remain guardians and witnesses to the Ancient Faith.

The Holy Spirit dwelleth in the Church.

Indeed, provided that we understand the sense in which we use the words, we may say with truth that the Church which is taught is infallible even as the Church which teaches. "You know all things," wrote the Apostle to the first Christians, "and have no need for any man to teach you anything."[1] In the Catholic Church we are taught not by man, nor of man *as man*, but by the Holy Spirit dwelling in the Church and guiding her into all Truth. St. John manifestly did not mean that those to whom he wrote did not stand in need of his teaching—he was constantly teaching them and with much authority—he did mean that they were not to look upon his teaching as the word of man, but as the Word of God; he did mean that Christians are liberated from all *human* authority in religion (which is slavery), and submitted only to that which is *divine* (which is freedom). And thus are they infallible (so far as their know ledge of revealed Truth is concerned), for they know "all things" that Christ has revealed, according to His saying to His Church: "Go teach all nations, *whatsoever* things I have commanded you."

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[1] 1 John ii. 27.

The security of Catholicism.

This is our great happiness as Catholics. We are secure—built together, as stones may be built together into one building upon a Rock, united together as various members in One Body, which is the mystical Body of Christ Himself. We have discussed the various ways in which the Word of God has been declared and made known throughout the ages of Christian history. For us, in practice, there is no difficulty in "hearing the Church," if only our hearts are willing. She speaks with no uncertain voice. All over the world her children learn the Faith, first, still as children in point of years, at their mother's knee, in catechisms approved by her Bishops and substantially the same in every land, in her ancient Creeds, through her solemn liturgies; they drink it in as they hear Mass, or kiss the Crucifix, or make their confessions, or pray to the Mother of God, and so does it become to them almost as a second nature. They know what they have received, woe to them if they keep it not as they have received it. When at length they come to man's estate, if they have leisure and education, they may examine it analytically, they may learn how it was defended by definitions of Popes and Councils against attack; reading the volumes of the Fathers and great Theologians they may watch its synthesis and development. But it always remains the same. No more can they doubt its unity and persistence than they can doubt the unity and persistence of their own personality throughout the various stages of life. And as life goes on, perhaps more and more do they fall back upon its unadorned statements, before yet controversy had attacked them, as they are to be found in their wondrous simplicity in the Holy Gospels. "The Word was made Flesh." "God hath so loved the world." "Christ Jesus our Lord." "Mary the Mother of Jesus." "They found the Child with Mary His Mother." "He hath died for sinners, of whom I am the chief." Against such sayings as these all criticism is impotent. Heaven and earth may pass away, but the Word of God passeth not. Nor is the truth of our religion in any way affected by the advance of scientific knowledge. One of the greatest of men of science, by common consent, is M. Pasteur. Perhaps I may be permitted once again to print the true but well-known tale—how when in the evening of his days the great investigator was asked whether the knowledge he had acquired, had in any way weakened his faith, he replied: "My faith, thank God, is that of a Breton peasant. I hope that before I die, it may be that of a Breton peasant's wife."

This may not be our lot, for the faith of the Breton peasant's wife has almost ceased to be faith—hers is a faith which has almost melted into sight. But we all, if we will, may so keep the Faith that, when the end comes and earthly things are passing, we may be able to say with St. Teresa: "After all, O Lord, I am a child of the Church,"[1] and with the Apostle, "This is the victory which overcometh the world, our Faith."[2]

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[1] Life, edited with Preface by Cardinal Manning, p. 364.

[2] 1 John v. 4.

WHAT DOES CATHOLIC CHRISTIANITY GIVE?

“ La source de toutes les hérésies est l’exclusion de quelques unes de ces vérités de foi ; et la source de toutes les objections que nous font les hérétiques est l’ignorance de quelques-unes de nos vérités.

“ C’est pourquoi le plus court moyen pour empêcher les hérésies, est d’instruire de toutes les vérités ; et le plus sûr moyen de les refuter, est de les déclarer toutes.”—PASCAL : *Pensées.*

PART III

WHAT DOES CATHOLIC CHRISTIANITY GIVE?

CHAPTER XVIII

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

CHRISTIANITY has bestowed upon mankind not only a definite Creed, but also a definite Code of Morals.

Faith and Works.

We are required not only to *believe*, but also to *do*. Faith without works is dead—of no avail before Him who is the Lord not of the Dead but of the Living. The Faith that is asked of us is a "Faith *working* by Charity." Our faith has to be *operative*, otherwise it will avail us nought at the Day of Account.

The need of divine help both for the intellect and the will.

It is, however, often hard to believe aright—that is, to submit our minds, in accordance with the divine Command, to Mysteries that are obscure and above our comprehension. It is also often difficult to live aright—that is, to submit our wills, in accordance with the divine Law, to moral precepts which are not seldom repugnant to our natural instincts, and are always above our natural powers to fulfil meritoriously. Both for the intellect, that we may believe, and for the will, that we may do, we stand in absolute need of supernatural help. This supernatural help is given us by our religion in rich abundance. It is called the Grace of Christ.

The grace of Christ.

Grace is the free, unmerited Gift of God. It comes from Him, who is full not only of Truth, but also of Grace, of whose fulness we may all receive.[1]

The appeal of Christianity in the first and second centuries.

Before we turn our attention to the various channels through which, chiefly, we receive the Grace of Christ, it may be well to glance somewhat more generally at the manner in which the sublime Gospel of Christianity made its appeal in the first and second centuries to a society that seemed sick unto death—to men and women, many of whom were without hope, as they avowedly were without God in the world. We shall then see that the gifts which Peter and Paul offered to the ancient civilisations of Greece and Rome are the very gifts of which we stand most in need to-day.

The gift of Freedom.

The Gift of Christianity in the first place is the Gift of *Freedom*. It is a Gift offered to all who will accept it—especially, perhaps, to the hopeless, for the hopeless need it most. It declares that there are no chains which it cannot break. It was prophesied to be Redemption for the captive. We are to be free with the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free. "If the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed."[1]

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[1] John i. 14-16.

It is freedom for the intellect, and freedom for the will. The intellect is to be set free from ignorance, but the learning, which this Gift promises, is not in any special way destined for those who are already learned, as men count learning; rather will the divine knowledge which it gives be acquired the more easily by those who never have had leisure at their disposal to bestow upon human letters. The will is to be set free from sin, and this freedom shall be valued the most by those to whom most has been forgiven, for the Son of Man came not to call the just but sinners to repentance.

Freedom for the intellect.

Freedom for the will.

Let us consider what this message meant to those in the old Greco-Roman world—Gentiles they are called in our New Testament—to whom it was first delivered. We know that amongst them there were not many who were rich, nor many who were learned. Do we realise that in large part the first Christians, our first Fathers in the Faith, were slaves?

Freedom for the slave.

"Far-seeing *Zeus*," said Homer, "takes away from a man half his worth, when he brings the day of slavery upon him."[2] Before the dawn of

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[1] John viii. 36.

[2] *Odyssey*, XVII. 322.

Christianity this doctrine would have been questioned by none, least of all perhaps by the slave himself. The *servile* vices were his—they seemed to belong to his very lot—does not the word *servility* suggest them? Obsequiousness, cringing—the inevitable results of conscious dependence upon another for the very right to live—how could such faults as these seem blameworthy to the slave? Yet they brought with them in their train, almost it appeared of necessity, lying, tale-bearing (how else obtain the favour of the master, without which existence was quite intolerable?), loss of self-respect, too often—especially in the case of women—degradation unspeakable. What of manhood, what of womanhood, could be said to remain?

And then—then there came the whisper of a new religion, of a new gospel. Good indeed were the tidings wafted by the breezes of hope to the ears of even the hitherto hopeless slave. In Christ Jesus, so—incredible though the words sounded—it was said to run—in Christ Jesus, there is neither bond nor free, but a new creature. "Wast thou called [to the Faith] being a bondsman? Care not for it. . . . For he that is called in the Lord, being a bondsman, is the freeman of the Lord."[1] What wonder—when the first preachers of this wondrous doctrine first appeared—what wonder if the slaves, now that the opportunity was theirs, "heard them gladly"?

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[1] 1 Cor. vii. 21, 22.

Light broke into their dreary encampments. The chains seemed to fall off their hands. When they were beaten, they had something of which they might think with comfort unspeakable as the cruel lashes fell, for the Light that had appeared in the East shone even upon *them.* They were redeemed from their bonds. By the stripes of their Lord they were healed; by His dear Hands oil and wine were poured into their wounds. Men were cruel and heartless, but He at least was full of compassion and of tenderness, and He loved *them.* A new dignity was theirs—a dignity undreamed of by their Pagan masters. They possessed a secret which filled their souls with joy and was all their own. How their blood must have quickened in their veins, as they heard how Jesus of Nazareth, the Living God, had for their sake taken "the form of a slave," as a slave had been scourged, and had died the death of a slave, abandoned by all, that He might free *them.* How they must have rejoiced when they learned of the nobility that should now for all time attach to the word, which heretofore had been used to express their misery and degradation, when they learned that the Apostle of the Gentiles—their Apostle—was proud to call himself the slave of Christ Jesus, and was *their* slave too, ready to serve them to the end! And not only the Apostle, but also his Lord should Himself serve *them!*

"The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister." These were Christ's own words—recorded for all time in the Sacred Scriptures of His new religion that had come to change the world—to minister, then, to *them*. Freedom now was theirs, not earthly manumission—arriving too probably when it had long ceased to have any value in the eyes of those who were worn out with lifelong toil—but spiritual freedom—freedom and equality, as regards their manhood, with their fellow-men.

A position in the Church of Christ was assured to slaves who became Christians which hitherto had been inconceivable.

If their masters had the happiness to become Christians too, those masters were their "brethren both in the flesh and in the Lord,"[1] both by nature and by grace; if unhappily their masters remained strangers to the Christian Faith, still a joy was theirs such as none who was not a Christian could ever hope to share. They were emancipated indeed, and sealed with the sign of their Redemption.

Once on board an ocean steamer I heard a plutocratic American icily observe that in her opinion "Catholicism is no doubt a very suitable religion for Irish servant girls." With exultation of spirit I reflected within my soul that there was a time when our holy religion seemed to many a purse-proud critic "a very suitable religion for our slaves."

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[1] Philemon 16.

Receiving the grace of Christianity, the slave was not merely reborn in the supernatural order, but even in the natural order, became a man again, or rather became a man for the first time. And in the records of persecution we find amongst the most heroic, men, women and girls, who were slaves, beautiful and admirable in death, as they had been most winning and gracious in their lives. The servile characteristics had disappeared in those for whom the wounded Hands of Jesus Christ were full of gifts.

But recognising what Christianity did for the first Christians, we dare not say that we have no slaves, and that therefore Christianity has lost its message for our age. The generation in which our lot is cast may or may not have social slaves in its midst; it most certainly is not without slaves of sin. "And they answered Him: We are the seed of Abraham, and we have never been slaves to any man. How sayest Thou: You shall be free? Jesus answered them: Amen, Amen, I say unto you that whosoever committeth sin is the slave of sin."[1]

Freedom from sin.

A slavery more terrible far than any which is merely social, is the slavery of sin. If social slavery takes half his manhood from a man, the slavery of sin robs him of all the true glory of manhood which consists in the friendship of God. From all sins Christianity promises deliverance to men if only they will be liberated, and to all sinners forgiveness if only they will come to Christ with a contrite heart. There are sins of which the world thinks nothing, and there are sins which make a man an outcast from his fellows. Christianity knows no such distinction in her welcome to the sinner who repents. If distinction there must be, the greater the sinner—the more disgraceful his sin—the deeper her welcome, for the greater his need.

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[1] John viii. 33, 34.

Our Lord and sinners.

Our Lord Jesus Christ was called on earth the Friend of Publicans and Sinners. Among the sinners publicly known as such, was the woman who washed His Feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair, of whom He was never ashamed—beneath His Cross by the side of His sinless Mother stood the Magdalen. The publicans were men held in execration—for the most part dishonest in their dealings—and one of them, after he left the receipt of custom became an Apostle and an Evangelist. Jesus declared that sinners, upon whom men of the world looked down with scorn, should enter His Kingdom before the self-righteous religionists of His time. From off His Cross He promised Paradise to a thief suffering punishment for his sins. He gave the keys of Heaven to the Apostle who had denied Him thrice, that Heaven's gates might ever be opened wide to sinners who would repent.[1]

The Catholic Church and sinners.

Such lessons as these the Church of Christ will never forget. In every age it is her joy and her pride to share the reproach of her Lord. She is known as the sinners' friend, the sinners' refuge, the sinners' home. Her portals are flung wide open for all those who are burdened and heavy laden to enter in, that they may find the rest for their souls, which is elsewhere denied them.

Other religions may rejoice over the respectability or the affluence of their adherents. The Church of God is about her Master's business, in her Master's way. She seeks, first of all, those who are broken and despised.

Origen and Celsus.

Origen tells us how Celsus objected against Christianity that other religions welcomed those "who are holy, who are pure from all stain and clean of hands," but that the first Christians reckoned amongst their number "the unjust, the thief, the burglar, the robber of temple and tomb—men whom a brigand would ask to join him."[2] There is no suggestion here that those who practised the Christian religion were allowed to continue in sin; but it is true that from the beginning the greatest sinners came to Christianity to be saved from the paralysis of sin, and that always they were certain of a welcome.

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[1] *Cf.* "Peccator accipit claves. . . . Provisum est, ut peccator aperiret innocentibus, ne innocentes clauderent contra peccatores" (St. Optatus, *Cont. Donat.*, vii. 3 *ad finem*).

[2] *Contra Celsum*, iii. 59.

It is also true that any religion which in practice does not know how to meet halfway—and more than halfway—how to receive—how to make at home, the repentant man or woman who has been sunk in sin and is rejected by the world—whatever else it may be—is not the Christianity of Christ.

Freedom in itself something Negative.

The first gift, then, of Christianity is *Freedom.* But freedom, however desirable in itself, is something negative. It is possible to be liberated—to be made a freed man—and yet not to use the liberty that has been won. Freedom is an essential condition for healthful activities, but is not itself activity. A man may be set free from the slavery of agnosticism—the inability to know—and yet may fail to use the freedom that now is his to acquire knowledge, *if he will.* A slave may come to understand that his external state is no impediment to the free action of his soul—and yet may fail to rise to God. A man may have been saved from gross sins of the past—may have repented and been forgiven—and yet may practise but little virtue in the time to come. Without the grace of Christ man cannot be freed. Without the grace of Christ even the free man can do nothing, in the supernatural order, to please his Lord.[1]

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[1] John xv. 5.

Christianity gives more than freedom. Together with freedom, Christianity gives life and power.

Christianity gives not only freedom but also life

"I have come," said Jesus Christ, "that that they may have life and that they may have it more abundantly."[1] He is not only the Truth, He is also the Way and the Life. He is the Way by which we travel to God, and we journey by participation in His Life. "In Him," writes St. Paul, "we can do all things—in Him who gives us strength." And again: "I live, yet not I, but He liveth in me."[2]

to the soul.

Now the life which our Lord declares that He has come to give, obviously is not natural life—the life of the body—for that, independently of His Coming, is enjoyed as a Gift from God, the Author of nature. Christ came to give supernatural life—the life of the soul. This He gives, as the Author of grace. Not that this spiritual life was not bestowed upon men before His Coming, but He has come to give it "more abundantly"—in more abundant ways than had even been imagined, until He came.

Analogy between nature and grace.

In considering the life of the soul we shall do well to always bear in mind its analogy with the life of the body. The order of nature and the order of grace run not on divergent, but on parallel lines. For nature and grace both proceed from God as from their

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[1] John x. 10.

[2] Gal. ii. 20.

First Principle, and grace presupposes nature. Without nature there would be nothing on which grace could build. To be reborn a man must first be born. He must be born in the natural order, before he can be born again supernaturally.

Our natural needs.

Now, the needs of our nature may be reduced to these. We need (*a*) entrance into life, and (*b*) air that we may breathe, and (*c*) strength to contend against the obstacles that will beset and imperil us, and (*d*) medicine if we are sick, and (*e*) food to sustain us. Our welfare also demands at least for a certain period of life (*f*) a family in which we may live, (*g*) a mother to care for us, (*h*) teachers to instruct us, and (*i*) friends to be our companions and, maybe, to help us in our trials. We feel also (*j*) the need of acknowledging the benefits of God and of adoring Him who is our Father in Heaven, we feel (*k*) a desire—almost a necessity—to enter into relations with those dear to us who have passed beyond our sight, and we feel (*l*) the need that the fear of death may be taken away from our souls—that we may be strengthened and taught how we may die—when our earthly life is drawing to a close.

Our supernatural needs.

It is my aim to show how perfectly the supernatural needs of the soul which have their analogies in these natural needs of man are satisfied by Catholic Christianity. (*a*) The entrance to the spiritual life is Baptism;

that life is strengthened by (*c*) Confirmation; and ministered to in sickness by (*d*) Penance; and nourished by (*e*) Holy Communion. (*b*) Prayer is the breathing of the soul, and (*i*) the Holy Sacrifice of the Altar satisfies in a perfect and supernatural manner our desire to worship God. Christ has raised the family in which we live to a great dignity through (*f*) the Sacrament of Matrimony; He has given us teachers to minister to our souls in (*h*) the Sacrament of Holy Order. He has given us (*g*) His Mother to be our Mother, and (*i*) His Saints in Heaven to be our friends and protectors; He has taught us how (*k*) to help the Holy Dead, and has provided consolations for (*l*) our last hour, which should take away from us the fear of death and smooth our passage to Eternity.

These are some of the gifts of God, which come to us through our religion, not only raising us when we fall, but enabling us to keep the Commandments—provisioning our souls as we travel through the different stages of our varying lives.

What was said with such admirable simplicity of His marvellous dealings with Israel of old has been still more wondrously accomplished since the Incarnation of His Son:

"He gave unto them"—in all truth He has also given unto us—"provisions in abundance."[1]

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[1] Ps. lxxvii.

CHAPTER XIX

THE SACRAMENTAL SYSTEM

BEFORE we consider in any detail the supernatural gifts of God—gifts that bestow freedom and life upon the soul—it is necessary to say something on what is known as the Sacramental System in general.

All Christians are agreed as to the necessity of divine grace for the overcoming of temptation and the practice of supernatural virtues. Divergence unhappily begins when we come to discuss the manner in which Christ bestows His grace upon His servants. All, it is true, are agreed that Christ gives the passing assistance, which is called *actual* grace, independently of Sacraments, and all are agreed that this assistance may be confidently relied upon in answer to prayer. The difference is concerned mainly with the grace which is called sometimes *sanctifying*, because it effects the union of the soul with God through charity, and sometimes *habitual*, because it remains in the soul as a " habit."

The difference between actual and habitual grace may be illustrated by a homely example. A man falls into the mire in a ditch. He may not be able to extricate himself. A good Samaritan passes his way, gives him the necessary help to get up, and also clothes him. The momentary help is a figure of actual grace, which is required only for the instant; the clothes may be compared to habitual grace, in so far as they are intended to remain upon the man who is clothed. Every comparison is faulty somewhere, and we see where this comparison fails. Our clothes will be taken off and will wear out, whereas habitual grace is intended to remain permanently ours during life. Still it serves the purposes for which alone I have used it—to make clear the distinction between habitual and actual grace.

Habitual grace.

Habitual or sanctifying grace is a created quality infused by God into the soul, whereby the soul is brought into a new relation and union with His Holy Spirit. The possession of this gift brings with it a special indwelling of God within the soul. The Holy Ghost is indeed present everywhere, but souls without sanctifying grace are excluded, by the essential limitations of human nature, from participation in the Activity or Life of God. The possession of sanctifying grace renders this participation possible—at least potentially. To render this potentiality ever more active is the essence and purpose of the spiritual life.

The Catholic Church teaches that this grace, whereby a man is pleasing to God, is both given and increased — for according to Catholic Doctrine it is capable of increase—through certain external rites called Sacraments. These Sacraments are all directed to this end—the birth and growth of sanctifying grace within the soul. They owe their origin directly to Christ. They are seven in number, and each was instituted for a specific purpose.

The Sacraments.

This belief has been controverted on one or other point by the various Protestant bodies. Since I have proved in the second part of this book that it is only from the Teaching of the Catholic Church that we may discover, should dispute arise, what is in each case the doctrine revealed by Christ, I do not consider it necessary at this point to demonstrate the truth of any point of Catholic Teaching, by means of a direct reply to the arguments of its adversaries. I shall content myself for the most part with setting forth the Catholic Doctrine, as simply and plainly as is in my power, stating broadly the grounds on which it rests—apart from the authority of the Church which, as I have already shown, is final and decisive. To deal with the various objections made against it by those who are not Catholics would be an interminable, and for the most part a fruitless task. Ordinarily, the best answer to any objection is one that is indirect and

Protestant denials.

consists in the accurate presentation of the revealed Doctrine.

By a Sacrament, then, Catholics mean a sign, conferring grace and signifying what it confers. At first sight it may appear strange that grace which is hidden and affects the soul should be conferred by a sign which is public and generally touches the body. But any surprise that may be occasioned by this fact ought to pass away when we remember the intimate and mysterious connexion between the body and soul in man. Together they make up an individual human being. A disembodied spirit is not complete—is not *man* as his Maker made him. So close indeed is the bond which binds body and soul in one, that medical science fully recognises as a fact, that bodily health is extraordinarily affected by the state of the soul. The issues even of life and death not seldom hang upon the question as to whether the soul is agitated or at rest. If, then (as is certainly the case), in the order of nature the state of the body often depends upon the state of the soul, we should cease to wonder when we learn that, in the order of grace—that is to say, in the economy of God's supernatural dealings with men—the soul is reached through the body and through the senses of the body, which are the soul's avenues of the soul.

Connexion of soul and body.

Moreover, we know that when God would redeem mankind, He took to Himself a Human Body—"A

Body hast Thou fitted unto Me"[1]—and in that Body died upon the Cross, saving us through physical suffering, patiently endured—above all by His Sacred Blood-shedding.

The Body of Our Lord.

The Religion of the Taking of *Flesh* by God can never be a religion which tolerates a low view of the bodies of men. In the Body of His humiliation our Lord lived upon the earth; in His glorified Body our Lord reigns in Heaven. "In Him dwelleth all fulness of the Godhead Bodily."[2] Yet He spoke to men with a Human Voice, and looked upon them out of Human Eyes. To their senses He appealed; through their senses He reached their souls. They heard and saw and touched the Word of Life.[3]

His contact with the bodies of His disciples.

We need not wonder then to find our Lord Jesus Christ using physical means to convey His grace, sending His disciples to baptize with water and to anoint with oil, giving Himself to be spiritual Food under the appearance of earthly bread and wine, conveyed to the bodies of those that believe in Him. As has often been said, the Sacramental System is "the extension of the Incarnation." It is also its outcome and consequence.

Signs.

A Sacrament is visible—a visible sign of an invisible grace. A sign is something through the knowledge of which we arrive at the knowledge of something else. I see smoke emerging from a chimney; by a knowledge of that smoke, which is a sign of fire, I arrive at the knowledge of something else—the fire beneath. This is a *natural* sign, depending upon a law of nature. Smoke is an effect of which fire is the cause. So where there is smoke, there must be also fire.

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[1] Heb. x. 5. [2] Col. ii. 9. [3] 1 John i. 1.

Conventional.

A sign may be *conventional*, that is something which has been arbitrarily agreed upon beforehand, as for example is the case in human speech, where by agreement it has been settled that certain words should stand for certain ideas, or in a cryptogram. The sacramental signs as used in the Sacraments are not conventional, but obvious. Water in Baptism obviously signifies cleansing, oil in Confirmation strengthening and in Extreme Unction healing, laying on of hands in Holy Order commission, bread and wine in the Eucharist nourishment.

Sacramental.

Matter and Form in the Sacraments.

A sacramental sign consists of two parts, called for convenience, "*Matter*" and "*Form.*" The "Matter" of the Sacrament is that part of the sign which is apprehended by the senses; the "Form" consists of the words which "determine" the matter to the purpose of the Sacrament. For example, in Baptism, the Matter is water. But water is used for many purposes. It is "determined" to the purpose of the Sacrament by the words "I baptize thee in the

Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost."

As often as a Sacrament is administered, there must be a *Subject* to receive it, and a *Minister* to confer it.

When we come to consider the Sacraments separately, in each case we shall have to speak of the *Matter* and *Form*, the *Minister* and the *Subject*. The meaning of these terms must, therefore, be kept clearly before the mind.

The Sacraments instituted by Christ.

The Sacraments have been instituted by Christ Himself, since no one but God can give an external rite the power of conferring internal grace, or, to put it more exactly, no one but God alone can promise to give internal grace through an external rite, and can carry out His Promise.[1]

Sacraments of the Dead and of the Living.

Two of the Sacraments—Baptism and Penance—are called Sacraments of the Dead, since they were primarily instituted to give Life—sanctifying grace (the first grace) to the soul which was dead; the other five Sacraments are called Sacraments of the Living, because they were instituted primarily to give increase of that grace to the soul that is living.

Each of the Seven, in addition to either conferring or increasing sanctifying grace, bestows upon the soul a grace which is called *sacramental* and is proper to itself. For example, that sacramental grace which is proper to the Eucharist is the grace of *sustenance* (analogous to the effect produced by wholesome food upon the body), and the sacramental grace proper to Matrimony is the grace which, if used aright, will enable husband and wife to discharge the duties peculiar to their state in a way pleasing to God.

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[1] It may be urged that God might, had it so pleased Him, have bestowed upon the Church the power to *institute* Sacraments. But that all the Sacraments were instituted by Christ was defined at Trent (Sess. vii., Can. 1).

Sacramental grace.

Having given this short summary of the Catholic Doctrine on the Sacramental System regarded as a whole, the ground is prepared for the consideration of the Sacraments in particular. Before approaching this task, however, it may be well to prove that they are not bare signs, but that, through the Divine Will and interposition, they really, and of themselves, when duly administered and received,[1] confer the grace which they signify; also that they are in number seven—neither more nor less.

The Sacraments not bare signs, but

convey the grace which they signify.

We find in all the passages of Holy Scripture, which treat of the operation of the Sacraments, that the external rite is mentioned as the instrument through which grace is conferred upon men—moreover that this grace is conferred by force of the sacramental sign, independently of any acts of the recipient. Thus we read that, as water is the instrument by which the body is cleansed from defilement, so Baptism *washes away sin*;[1] again, that Christ has cleansed the Church, *by the Washing of Water*, in the Word of Life.[2] St. Paul, trusting "the unfeigned faith that was in" Timothy, admonished him to "stir up the grace of God, which is in thee, *by the imposition of my hands*." "Be baptized," said St. Peter on the Day of Pentecost, "every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ, *for the remission of your sins*, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."[3] "But when," wrote St. Paul to Titus, "the goodness and kindness of God our Saviour appeared, He saved us, not by the works of justice which we have done, but according to His Mercy *by the washing of regeneration*, and renewal of the Holy Ghost, Whom He hath poured forth upon us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour, that being justified by His grace, we may be heirs according to hope of Life Everlasting."[4] There is no hint of any cause of grace, excepting the external rite. It is always the rite itself which produces the effect—"cleansing," "the grace of God," "the remission of sins," "the gift of the Holy Ghost," "justification," "heirship," together with "hope of Life Everlasting."

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[1] These dispositions, necessary for the worthy reception of the Sacraments (*cf. e.g.* 1 Cor. xi. 29), are only conditions, not "the instrumental cause," of the bestowal of grace.

[1] Acts xxii. 16.
[2] Ephes. v. 25, 26.
[3] Acts ii. 38.
[4] Titus iii. 4-7.

The Sacraments confer grace ex opere operato.

When no obstacle is interposed, the Sacrament works, of itself, by the power of God; as theologians express it, not *ex opere operantis* (by the work of the human worker), but *ex opere operato* (by the work that is wrought by God Himself). There are countless analogies in nature, where God has established some channel of natural gifts, for example light, electricity, radium, which produce their effects of themselves, independently of human agency, though man is free to use them, or to neglect them, or even deliberately to shut himself out from them—opposing an obstacle to their beneficent operation. For example, a man may deliberately and effectively keep the sunlight out of the room in which he dwells. But when he repents of his folly and lets in the sun once more, it is not his action in opening the shutters, but the kindly light itself which, as he submits to its glow, takes the chill from his heart, and fills the room, erstwhile so cold, with generous warmth.

Analogies from Nature.

If we investigate historically the Teaching of the Catholic Church that the Sacraments instituted by Christ are seven in number, we shall find that the word *Sacrament* will not help us in our enquiry. It is with the *thing*—with the reality—that we here have to do, not with the mere word. For words change their meaning in the course of years, whereas a thing which once has

Words and things.

had real existence remains always the same. Our concern is not so much as to the meaning that has at various times been attached to the word Sacrament, but as to whether it is a fact that the Church has always believed that she possesses seven (neither more nor less) Sacred Rites, instituted by Christ, which confer grace.

Meaning of the word Sacrament.

If we turn aside for a moment from the main question and examine the meaning of the word Sacrament, we shall discover that amongst the Romans it was used in a great variety of senses, through all of which ran the idea of something being secured by a religious sanction (for example it denoted the oath of fidelity taken by soldiers to their generals), whilst amongst Christians it was at first employed in a very wide and even loose sense. For example, Pliny writes that Christians bound themselves by a Sacrament to abstain from crime;[1] St. Cyprian speaks of the practice of morning prayer as a Sacrament,[2] and St. Augustine lays it down vaguely that signs which guide to the things of God are called Sacraments.[3]

Number of the Sacraments.

In these words of St. Augustine we have a foreshadowing of the restricted use of the word, by which its use was confined to the Seven Great Mysteries of Christianity.[1] When Peter Lombard in the twelfth century taught expressly that there were seven, and only seven, such Mysteries instituted by Christ to confer grace, his teaching was accepted without comment in the West and henceforward the word Sacrament was used in Catholic Theology exclusively of these Seven. The works of the great Scholastics of the Middle Ages are full of discussions concerning the Sacraments, but there was never any controversy as to their number until the question was raised disputatiously by the first Protestants. The Council of Trent solemnly defined, in condemnation of the denials of Luther and Calvin, that the Sacraments instituted by Christ are seven in number, but this truth had been already accepted without discussion by the Greeks at the Councils of Lyons and Florence. At the present day it is held as tenaciously by the various separated churches of the East as by Catholics. On the one hand each of the seven Sacraments was accepted throughout Christendom, until the sixteenth century, without cavil or doubt, as having been instituted by Christ for the purpose for which it was used ; on the other hand there is no trace of any other external rite besides the Seven having ever been regarded as a Sacrament in the restricted use of the word. The doctrine that Christ instituted seven Sacraments and seven only is therefore "in possession" and has behind it all the strength of "prescription"—that is, of the Catholic Tradition, handed down to the Church by the Holy Apostles.

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[1] *Epist.* xcvi.
[2] *De Oratione Domini*, n. 35.
[3] *Epist.* cxxxviii. 7.

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[1] The Greek word *μυστήριον* is rendered by the Latin *sacramentum* in the Vulgate (Tobias xii. 7 ; Eph. v. 32).

CHAPTER XX

BAPTISM AND CONFIRMATION

Laws of Natural and Supernatural Birth.

As every living man has been born into this world, in dependence upon physical forces of Nature—forces which are immutable in their operation—so does the mysterious regeneration or new birth, not of the body but of the soul, depend upon a divinely established supernatural channel. If life is to be ours—whether bodily or spiritual—obedience must be rendered to the laws that enshrine the springs of vitality.

Baptism.

When we listen to the teaching of Christ, who is the Author of all created life—and therefore also of the laws which govern life—we shall learn that, from the time of the promulgation of the Christian Dispensation, the birth of the soul is effected through Baptism. "Unless a man is born again of water and the Holy Ghost he cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven."[1] By the action of the Holy Spirit a man is born anew through the cleansing of water, and thereby enters into the Kingdom of God. As water cleanses the body from physical defilement, so does Baptism cleanse the soul from the stain of sin. This is the doctrine of the New Testament,[1] and of the Catholic Church.

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[1] John iii. 5.

(*a*) The *Matter* of the Sacrament of Baptism is Water.

(*b*) The words "I baptize thee in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost" constitute its *Form*.

(*c*) Every unbaptized human being is capable of being its *Subject*.

(*d*) Baptism should, when possible, be administered by a priest. Any person, however, even a pagan or a child, can baptize validly, and, in case of need, lawfully.

(*e*) The Council of Trent teaches[2] that the three Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Order differ from the rest in the fact that they can only be received once, and, further, that when they are received an ineffaceable mark called *Character* (meaning in Greek something carved or engraven on wood or stone) is imprinted on the soul. In order to emphasise the fact that the impression is not merely transient, but permanent and indelible, this character is sometimes called a seal.[3]

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[1] *Cf.* Acts ii. 38; xxii. 16; 1 Cor. vi. 9-11, etc.

[2] Sess. 7. *De Sacrament.*, Can. 9.

[3] *Cf.* 2 Cor. i. 22; Eph. viii. 13; iv. 30.

It may be well shortly to amplify these points of Catholic Doctrine.

The Matter of Baptism.

(*a*) In the days of the Apostles, and for many ages, water was ordinarily applied to the recipients of Baptism, by immersion. It seems, however, probable that even in Apostolic days Baptism was sometimes administered in another mode as, for example, when three thousand were baptized at once in consequence of a sermon preached by St. Peter.[1] And we find St. Cyprian in the third century speaking of "sprinkling or immersion" as alternative modes of Baptism.[2] At the present day, and for many centuries Baptism has been administered throughout the West not by immersion, but by pouring of water. This change is purely *disciplinary* and therefore within the power of the Church to effect. It was brought about by motives of convenience, especially in cold climates. Since Baptism is a sign—through the washing of at least a part of the body—of the cleansing of the soul, the water must (if there is to be a valid Baptism) really flow. We learn from the practice of the Church that this is sufficient. Should Christians be confronted with the fact that wherever Baptism is mentioned in the Gospels it seems to be connected with immersion, they will generally recognise at once, that it is absurd to imagine that the Catholic Church

Immersion and Sprinkling or the Pouring of Water.

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[1] Acts ii. 41.

[2] *Epist.* lxxvi.

has erred on a matter of such importance, and that consequently there is at the present time no valid Baptism amongst Christians, excepting in the East and amongst "Baptists." Still, I think that it must be admitted that *if the appeal be made to Scripture alone independently of the interpretation and authority of the Church,* the Baptists, who hold that Baptism necessarily involves immersion, have, on the whole, the best of the argument.

Its Form.

(*b*) The Form of Baptism is taken from the words of our Lord.[1] In the Acts of the Apostles, however, we read that catechumens were baptized "in the Name of the Lord Jesus."[2] St. Thomas Aquinas[3] and St. Bonaventure[4] agree in drawing the conclusion that the Apostles must have received a special permission to use this Form for the greater honour of the Holy Name of Jesus, which is above every other name, but was then dishonoured both by Jew and Gentile. It seems, however, simpler to understand the words "In the Name of the Lord Jesus" as a compendious expression denoting Christian Baptism as contrasted with the Baptism of John.

Its Subject.

(*c*) It is the Catholic Doctrine that any unbaptized person is a possible "subject" for the Sacrament of Baptism, although in the case of adults the Sacrament can only be received

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[1] Matt. xxviii. 19.

[2] Acts ii. 38 ; viii. 12 ; x. 48.

[3] 3 p., q. 66 a. 6 ad I.

[4] *In lib.* iv. *Sent. Dist.* 3, q. 2.

Baptists and Infant Baptism.

fruitfully by one who possesses the necessary dispositions, which include supernatural sorrow for sin and faith in our Lord. Against the Catholic practice of baptizing infants Baptists[1] are accustomed to argue that wherever we find mention of Baptism in Holy Scripture, there is also reference to Faith as a prerequisite, and that faith is manifestly impossible in the case of an infant.

In answer to this argument a Catholic will once more appeal to Tradition. In a matter of this nature the Church cannot err. Moreover, whilst, on the one hand, the passages in Holy Scripture which presuppose Faith for the fruitful reception of this Sacrament are all concerned with the Baptism of adults, on the other hand, the words of our Lord concerning the necessity of Baptism by water and the Holy Ghost admit of no exception. Wherever the Baptism of water is possible, there the Baptism of water is necessary.

Baptism of Water.

The Catholic Church teaches that there is but One Baptism for the forgiveness of sins. If, however, Baptism of water (*fluminis*) is not possible, its place according to Catholic Tradition and Teaching can be supplied either by the Baptism of Desire (*Flaminis*, the Fire of the Holy Ghost) or by the Baptism of Blood (*Sanguinis.*)[1] In both these cases the word baptism is used by analogy only.

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[1] The word "Baptist" is a contraction of the word *Antipedobaptist* (*ἀντί, παῖς, βαυτίζω*), that is, a person opposed to the Baptism of children. *Anabaptist* (*ἀνά βαπτίζω*) signifies a rebaptizer, that is, one who rebaptized those baptized in infancy on the ground that infant Baptism is invalid. The Anabaptists (a German sect of the sixteenth century) also denied the right of private property, and were extraordinarily fanatical and violent in their methods.

By the Baptism of Desire is understood the wish for Baptism (at least the implicit desire) accompanied by the necessary dispositions of the soul. Our Lord has said: "He that loveth Me, shall be loved of My Father."[2] The Love of Christ necessarily contains within itself the desire for Baptism, and the desire is taken by God for the deed, where the deed is impossible, for God demands impossibilities of no man. Thus St. Augustine distinguishes between the Sacrament of Baptism and the turning of the heart to God. He teaches that if either of these conditions cannot be secured, the other will be sufficient. A baptized child is saved, without turning its heart to God, should it die before coming to the age of reason, and a man who turns to God is saved without Baptism, provided he in no way despise the Sacrament.[3]

Of Desire.

The Baptism of Blood.

By the Baptism of Blood is meant Martyrdom. Martyrdom is the patient endurance of death, or of sufferings which naturally would lead to death,[1] for the Catholic Faith, or any Christian virtue. Our Lord has promised: "Every one that shall confess Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in Heaven." St. Augustine points out that these words are as universal in their scope and import as those in which our Lord taught the general necessity of the Baptism of water. Hence he deduces the consequence that remission of sins is secured by death for Christ, as certainly as by the Sacrament of Baptism.[2] To avoid any possible misconception it may be well to point out that in both cases sorrow for "actual" sins is a necessary condition for their forgiveness. St. Paul has written: "If I give my body to be burned and have not Charity [that is, the Love of God, which necessarily involves sorrow for sin], it profiteth me nothing."[3] It is conceivable that a man may die rather than deny Christ, or the Faith of Christ, for some sinful motive, without any love of Christ in his heart. In this case he would not be a Martyr in the sense attached to that word by the Church. But true Martyrdom blots out sin and, according to Catholic Teaching, also the punishment due to sin. For this reason St. Augustine declares that it would be an insult to pray *for* a Martyr—to whose prayers, on the contrary, we ought rather to recommend ourselves in our necessities.[1]

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[1] *Cf.* St. Gregory Nazianzen, *Orat.* 39. *In Sancta Lumina*, 17, P.G. 35, 35*b*.

[2] John xiv. 21.

[3] *De Baptismo*, iv. 25, 32.

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[1] Thus St. John the Evangelist, who by order of the Emperor Domitian was thrown into a cauldron of boiling oil, has always been regarded as a Martyr, though his life was saved by miracle, and in the end he died a natural death (*cf.* Tertullian, *De Præscript.*, 36).

[2] *De Civitate Dei*, 13, 7.

[3] 1 Cor. xiii. 3.

The Minister of Baptism.

(*d*) In the third century St. Cyprian, and with him the vast majority of the African Bishops of his time, held that Baptism by heretics was invalid, whilst several of the early heretics maintained that no Baptism was valid if administered outside their own sects—the Donatists, for example, rebaptized all those who had been baptized by Catholics. The Catholic Church teaches, on the contrary, that Baptism is valid by whomsoever conferred, when the Matter and Form have been duly used, with the intention of conferring the Sacrament instituted by Christ as the condition for initiation into His Kingdom.

Conditional Baptism.

(*e*) Although the Sacrament of Baptism can only be received once, and to rebaptize is to commit a sacrilege, the Church of England wisely provides that in case any doubt as to validity of Baptism cannot be cleared up, Baptism must be conferred under condition.[2] This is also the

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[1] *Sermo* 17 *De Verbis Apost.* (159), i. 1.

[2] The Rubric at the end of the form for *The Ministration of Private Baptism of Children in Houses* provides as follows: "But if they which bring the Infant to the Church do make such uncertain answers to the Priest's questions, as that it cannot appear that the Child was baptized with Water, In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, (which are essential parts of Baptism), then let the Priest

Rule of the Catholic Church, and it is the only possible course if, on the one side, the certainty of Baptism is to be secured—so far as is humanly possible—and, on the other, the risk of rebaptism is to be avoided and the Sacrament to be safeguarded from profanation.

The Sacrament of Confirmation.

Closely connected with, yet distinct from, the Sacrament of Baptism is the Sacrament of Confirmation. By Baptism we are born anew and receive the sanctifying grace of God; by Confirmation we receive an increase of that grace and a special gift of the Holy Spirit to enable us boldly to profess the Faith. Baptism is the Sacrament of Regeneration; Confirmation the Sacrament of Strengthening.

Age at which Confirmation is received.

For many centuries, throughout the Church, Confirmation was administered immediately, or at least soon, after Baptism. At the present time Confirmation is not ordinarily administered in the West (excepting in case of dangerous illness) until a child has attained the age of discretion. The reason for this change of discipline is to be found in the fact that, since Confir-

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baptize it in the form before appointed for Publick Baptism of Infants; saving that at the dipping of the Child in the Font, he shall use this form of words: *If thou art not already baptized, N., I baptize thee In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.*"

mation is not necessary for salvation, it is lawful, for an adequate cause, to postpone the Sacrament—even with a certain risk of its occasionally not being received at all. Such a cause is supplied by the fact that it is desirable to give some instruction concerning the Sacrament to the child who is about to receive it—instruction which, as is obvious, would ordinarily be useless until about the age of seven years. The same consideration has led to a similar postponement of Holy Communion, which, like Confirmation, in the first days of the Church was given to infants. In practice, since the Bishop may only be able to give facilities for Confirmation every three or four years, it is often impossible for children to be confirmed until they are nine or even ten years of age, whilst they should make their First Communion when they are seven or younger.

Its Matter.

(*a*) The *Matter* of Confirmation is Chrism blessed by a Bishop, together with the laying on of hands. We may note that, as in the Sacrament of Baptism, the symbolism of water depends upon its use in the washing of the body, so, in Confirmation, chrism (a mixture of fragrant balsam with olive-oil) reminds us of the use of oil by the athletes of old in preparation for a race or contest. In the East there is no laying on of hands distinct from the anointing.

Its Form.

(*b*) The *Form* of Confirmation consists in the words used by the Bishop, which vary in East and West, but always express the grace that is given.[1]

Its Subject.

(*c*) The *Subject* of Confirmation is any baptized person who has not yet been confirmed.

Its Minister.

(*d*) The *Minister* is a Bishop, or a priest delegated—in the West explicitly—*ad hoc* by the Holy See.

The Church of England and Confirmation.

In Article XXV. of the Church of England we read as follows: "There are two Sacraments, ordained of Christ our Lord, that is to say, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord. Those five commonly called Sacraments, that is to say, *Confirmation*, Penance, . . . are not to be counted for Sacraments of the Gospel, being such as *have grown partly of the corrupt following of the Apostles,* partly are states of life allowed in the Scriptures."

Since Confirmation is manifestly not "a state of life," it follows that in the mind of the author of this "Article of religion" *it had grown from the corrupt following of the Apostles.* In order to cut down this corrupt growth, the Church of England at the Reformation abolished the anointing which according to the Tradition of both East and West is essential to the reception of this Sacrament.

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[1] The present Western Form is "Signo te signo crucis: et confirmo chrismate salutis." The Form used in the East is Σφραγῖς δωρεᾶς πνεύμαῖος ἁγίου. Ἀμήν.

At the same time the ancient Form was changed to the following prayer: "Defend, O Lord, this Thy child (or this Thy servant) with Thy heavenly grace, that he may continue Thine for ever; and daily increase in Thy Holy Spirit more and more, until he come unto Thy everlasting Kingdom. Amen."

The ancient Sacrament of Confirmation was thus changed into a Renewal and Ratification of Baptismal Vows, made in presence of the Bishop, and accompanied by the imposition of his hands. In correspondence with this view of the Rite which it is his duty to administer, the Bishop is instructed to question the candidates before the laying on of hands: "Do ye here, in the presence of God, and of this congregation, renew the solemn promise and vow that was made in your name at your Baptism; ratifying and confirming the same in your own persons, and acknowledging yourselves bound to believe, and to do, all those things which your godfathers and godmothers then undertook for you?" "And," the Rubric proceeds, "every one shall audibly answer: 'I do.'" There then follows a prayer to God to "strengthen [those about to be confirmed] with the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, and *daily* increase in them Thy manifold gifts of grace." The increase of grace is asked for as something that is to be given not immediately, but "daily," in the future. We find no mention of sacramental grace to be conferred *through* the laying on of hands. On the contrary, after the laying on of hands has just taken place, the Bishop in a collect explains the purpose of the ceremony which he has performed: "Almighty and Everliving God, . . . we make our humble supplications unto Thee for these Thy servants, upon whom (after the example of Thy Holy Apostles) we have now laid our hands, *to certify* them (by this sign) of Thy favour and gracious goodness towards them."

The Anglican Confirmation is a new rite, until the time of the Reformers unknown in Christendom, intended to replace something which was deemed to be a "corrupt growth," falsely claiming to be based upon the example of the Apostles.

Holy Scripture and the Effects of Confirmation.

Although the use of Chrism in Confirmation depends not upon Holy Scripture, but upon continuous Tradition, Holy Scripture distinctly tells us that when the Apostles laid their hands upon the Samaritans who had recently been baptized, it was that they might thereby and immediately receive the Holy Ghost. "Then they laid their hands upon them and they received the Holy Ghost. And when Simon [Magus] saw that through the imposition of the hands of the Apostles the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, saying: 'Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I shall lay my hands, *he may receive the Holy Ghost.*'"[1]

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[1] Acts viii. 17-19.

The Anglican service "certifies." The Catholic Sacrament "gives." In Confirmation we receive not a sign merely, nor a certificate, but a seal[1] and a gift. This seal is a mark upon the soul which will last for eternity;[2] this gift is now, as in the days of the Apostles, the Holy Ghost.

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[1] 2 Cor. i. 21; Eph. i. 13; iv. 30.

[2] *Cf.* p. 380.

CHAPTER XXI

THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

Sin.

WHAT disease is to the body, that sin is to the soul. Disease is disorder in the body, sin is disorder in the soul. There are some diseases which inflict injury, more or less serious, upon a man's physical system without bringing about its dissolution—others, on the contrary, are the direct cause of his death; in like manner, there are sins which do injury to the soul and yet leave it alive—these Catholic Theology calls "*venial*" — whilst others, which deprive the soul of life itself, are termed "*grievous*" or "*mortal*." By the word *sin* is understood a wilful infraction of a known Law of God. It is disobedience to our Lord, which is of the essence of sin and preys upon the soul as disease preys upon the body.

Sin, mortal and venial.

At first sight it may perhaps seem strange that we should speak of any sin as "venial." It is sometimes urged by Protestant disputants that no sin is "venial" in God's sight, but that every sin is "grievous."

Protestant children were once gravely taught in stock nursery doggerel that "to steal a pin is as big a sin as to steal a bigger thing." As I have heard it put by a man who objected strongly to Catholic Teaching on this subject: "I do not hold with your distinctions. Sin is sin. That is enough for me." Yes, sin undoubtedly is sin, and as such every sin is hateful to God. This is a solemn truth of which the Catholic Church never loses sight for a moment. At the same time, common sense agrees with the general conscience of mankind and with Catholic Theology in recognising the fact that there *is* a distinction between sins and sins. A child, knowing that it is forbidden so to do by the Law of God, may steal a penny, that will never be missed, to buy sweets for a friend; a man may ruin the widow and the fatherless to gratify some vile appetite. Each has committed a sin—the sin of theft. Few will now have the hardihood to contend that on this account the moral guilt is the same in each case.

The distinction between venial and grievous sins supposes a knowledge of the technical sense in which the words are used. When Catholic Theologians term certain offences "grievous," they mean that they are *so* grievous as to bring death to the soul; when they term certain offences "venial" they mean that they are relatively venial, since after they have been committed the soul still preserves its life in the sight of God. The child who steals the penny stains the wedding garment he received at Baptism, the man who defrauds the widow and the orphan loses that garment altogether. It is easier to remove the stain than to recover the garment which has been cast away. Again, to change the illustration, our Lord compares some sins to a beam, others to a mote in the eye. It is easier to remove the effects upon the eyesight of a mote than the effects of a beam, for the former will only impair the eyesight, the latter when thrust into the eye will often destroy it altogether.

It is the teaching of the Catholic Church that there is no obligation to confess venial sins which are often forgiven by God without the intervention of a Sacrament, but that the life bestowed in Baptism which has been destroyed by mortal sin is restored by another Sacrament distinct from Baptism. This Sacrament, instituted by Christ primarily for the remission of mortal sins committed after Baptism, is called the Sacrament of Penance, and in English popular parlance is known as Confession to a Priest.

It surely need not surprise us to find that habitual grace (carrying with it friendship with God, first communicated through a Sacrament), should, if lost, be recovered sacramentally, as it was given sacramentally, through a Mystery appointed by Christ. We know that there is but One Baptism for the remission of sins. Baptism can never be repeated, but the Sacrament of Penance restores the life to the soul that was dead and so far restores the baptismal gift.

Before we consider the Sacrament of Penance in general, it may be well for the sake of clearness to premise that sacramental Confessions are of two kinds. There are Confessions which are *necessary* and there are Confessions which are *voluntary*.

Necessary

(*a*) A "*necessary*" Confession, sometimes called a Confession of Obligation, is a Confession made by a Christian who, after Baptism, has committed mortal sin, from the guilt of which he has not yet been absolved by a duly authorized Priest. Such a Confession is necessary—so the Catholic Church teaches—by the Law of Christ, in the same sense in which Baptism is necessary—that is, where it is possible.

And Voluntary Confession.

(*b*) A *voluntary* Confession, sometimes called a Confession of Devotion, is a Confession made by a Christian whose conscience is not burdened by the guilt of mortal sin.

(*a*) Catholics are assured of the obligation of confessing mortal sins committed after Baptism by the authoritative teaching of the Catholic Church.[1]

If we turn to the witness of Scripture and Tradition we shall find there also much to the purpose.

For example St. Matthew writes that our Lord bestowed upon His Apostles the power not only to "bind," but also to "loose," and that this power included authority to remove the guilt of sins is made clear by St. John, who tells us that after His Resurrection Christ breathed upon them and said: "*As* the Father hath sent Me, even *so* send I you. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them, and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained." These words are as explicit as words can be with regard to the power of forgiving sins bestowed upon the Church. Our Lord was sent by His Father to forgive sins, according to the Word that was spoken to His Mother: "You shall call His Name Jesus, for He shall save His People from their sins." Now, even *as* the Father had sent His Son, *so* did His Son send His Church, and that there might be no doubt as to the precise import of this divine commission, the words are added: "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them, and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained." But, no one can imagine that this awful power was to be used arbitrarily. The sins of men were not to be forgiven or retained without regard to the nature of those sins and to the dispositions of the sinner. Sin comes from the heart, and is of its essence internal. It consists in the turning away of the will from the command of God to something which is forbidden, and may be deliberately consummated within the soul without any external act whatsoever. Consequently, many sins are known only to the man who has committed them, and by

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[1] Council of Trent, Sess. 14, Can. 1-4.

The Witness of Holy Scripture.

him only can they be confessed to another. What is true of the act of sin is also true of the act of repentance, which is necessary for forgiveness. No man but the sinner himself can know whether he has turned back in his heart to God and away from his sin. From this fact it follows that the power to forgive sins which the Gospel assures us that Christ bestowed upon the Apostles carried with it as a consequence the obligation on the part of the sinner of making known his sins, and also of declaring his repentance and readiness (if necessary) to make reparation, before those sins could lawfully be forgiven. This obligation is the obligation of Confession.

And of Tradition.

The testimony of Tradition, which bears witness to the existence of the Sacrament of Penance in the Church from the beginning, also makes it clear that the power to forgive sins bestowed by our Lord upon His Apostles was (like the authority to baptize, or to preach, or to offer the Eucharist) conferred in their persons upon His Church to the end of time, carrying with it the duty of confession on the part of repentant sinners. It is beyond the scope of this book to heap up references from the Fathers to prove this fact. Those who desire them can easily find them elsewhere. It will be enough for me here to give two quotations which will by themselves make the matter clear, at least as to the mind of the Fathers who flourished in the fourth century. We will take one from the East, the other from the West.

In Asia St. Fulgentius wrote as follows: "He that believes not in the power which resides in the Church to forgive all sin cuts himself off from all pardon of sin, if he persevere in this hardness of an impenitent heart, and leave this world severed from the communion of the Church."[1]

And in Italy St. Ambrose compared the duty of Christian priests to examine the sins of Christians, before absolving those sins, to the duty assigned to Jewish priests of examining cases of leprosy and pronouncing whether the disease was present or had disappeared.[2] We recall the fact that our Lord recognised this obligation when he told the leper whom He had healed to "show himself to the priest,"[3] and we remember that leprosy is regarded in Holy Scripture as an image of sin. Under the Mosaic Law the leper was required to show himself —the state of his body—to the Jewish priest;[4] similarly, under the Christian dispensation, the sinner who seeks forgiveness is required to disclose the wounds of his soul to the "Minister of Christ and the dispenser of the Mysteries of God."[5]

Confession is "a work" and a difficult "work," irksome to human nature. As such, it was opposed to the Lutheran doctrine of justification not "by works, but by faith only," and therefore was repugnant to the whole Lutheran system and had to be abolished. But Luther made no serious attempt to deal with the positive argument for the duty of Confession. That argument remained unchallenged in its contentions. It relies, as we have seen, upon:

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[1] *De Remissione Peccatorum*, i. 23.

[2] In Psa. xxxviii. 14.

[3] Matt. viii. 4.

[4] Lev. xiii. 2.

[5] 1 Cor. iv. 1.

The Lutheran denial of the Sacrament of Penance.

(1) The fact that Christ bestowed upon His Apostles the power to forgive sins.

(2) The Teaching of the Catholic Church at the present day, together with her unbroken Tradition, to which we may add the testimony of the separated communities of the East.

(*b*) The seventeenth century gave birth to the heresy of Jansenism. The Jansenists accepted, at least professedly, the teaching of the Catholic Church with regard to *necessary* Confessions. I say "at least professedly," for, though they admitted that the Church has the power to forgive all mortal sins in the Sacrament of Penance and insisted on the duty of confessing such sins to a priest, they required such dispositions on the part of the penitent, before he could validly receive absolution, as to make in practice their acceptance of Catholic doctrine all but nugatory. In practice, hardly was any man absolved by a Jansenist Confessor. Still, as regards the for-

Jansenism and the Sacrament of Penance.

giveness of mortal sin, the Jansenists contradicted no formal Catholic dogma. They taught, however, that it was an abuse and useless to confess venial sins, thus abolishing at a stroke the use of *voluntary* confession. The Council of Trent had already laid it down that to mention venial sins in Confession is "right and useful,"[1] and Pope Pius VI. condemned the Jansenist error on this subject as rash, pernicious and contrary to the custom of the Saints and pious persons which was approved by the Council of Trent.[2] It is obvious that if the Jansenists had had their way, the secrecy of Confession would have disappeared. If the confession of venial sins had been abolished as "an intolerable abuse," it would have been evident that any one seen going to Confession had committed mortal sin! But Jansenism was a corruption and is now little more than a repulsive memory. The power which our Lord bestowed upon His Church is exercised daily the world over and in its scope is absolutely comprehensive. It includes *all* sins, even the gravest, but also even the smallest (provided of course they be real sins). "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven"—in these words we find no hint of any restriction or of any exception whatsoever. By the Mercy of God *all* sins fall under the power of the Keys left by Christ to the Apostolic and undying Church.

Venial sins are "usefully" confessed to a priest for, amongst others, the following reasons: (*a*) although they may be forgiven in other ways without confession, they are *directly* and (provided they be repented of) *certainly* remitted in the Sacrament of Penance. At the same time (*b*) an increase of habitual grace is, in virtue of the reception of the Sacrament, bestowed upon the soul, together with aid to resist temptation in the future. Besides, (*c*) the confession of venial sins is not seldom an exercise of considerable and most profitable humility. We need not therefore be surprised that confession of venial sins, if persevered in with patience, will often gradually lead to the extinction of an evil habit and be a powerful factor in the development of the Christian character.

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[1] Sess. 14, cap. 5.

[2] *Auctorem Fidei*, 39.

The usefulness of the Sacramental Confession of Venial Sins.

It is above all experience that convinces those who use regular Confession of its advantage as a means not merely of uprooting evil habits, but also of advancing in the ways of God.

The Three Parts of the Sacrament of Penance.

In every sacramental Confession, whether "necessary" or "voluntary," there are three parts, each of which is essential:

(*a*) Sorrow.
(*b*) Confession.
(*c*) Satisfaction.

(*a*) Sin is always hateful in the sight of God.

Therefore no sin can be forgiven without regret on the part of the sinner for having offended God.

Contrition.

This regret may arise from the thought of having sinned against Him who is infinitely good; or it may spring from some supernatural, but less high source, for example from the consideration that by sin we have deserved the punishment of which we are warned in the Scriptures, or again from the thought of the shamefulness of vice.

Attrition and Perfect Contrition.

In the latter case the regret for sin is called *less perfect Contrition*, or sometimes *Attrition*, whereas the sorrow that arises from the thought of offending God, independently of all consequences to ourselves, is called technically *Perfect Contrition* —not as though it were necessarily perfect *in degree*, but because it is perfect *in its motive*.[1] It is Catholic Doctrine that Perfect Contrition necessarily brings with it immediate forgiveness of sin before the reception of any Sacrament. As the final turning away from God involved in mortal sin is instantaneous, so also instantaneous is God's Forgiveness. The Council of Trent, however, warns us that God's forgiveness is not to be ascribed to the contrition itself apart from the desire of the Sacrament of Penance which it necessarily includes.[1] As we have seen to be the case with regard to the parallel case of Baptism, this desire need not be, and in the case of a man who does not know that Christ is the Author of the Sacrament of Penance cannot well be, explicit, but it must be there at least implicitly. A man who would refuse to go to Confession, even though he understood that God required it of him, cannot be said to be truly sorry for his sins because he has offended God, since this sorrow necessarily involves a readiness and even a desire to keep the divine commandments and do all that God requires at our hands. But where this desire really exists as part of regret for having sinned against God, there forgiveness will undoubtedly be immediate and divine grace will once more clothe the soul and restore it to the friendship of our Lord. When a man honestly says, not necessarily in words, but from his heart, that is with his will: "My Lord, I am sorry for having offended Thee, who art so good," he loves God, since his sorrow for sin springs from the Love of God as its source. And Jesus Christ has said: "He that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and We will come to him and will make Our abode with him."[2] The Love of God brooks no delay. "Turn ye to Me, saith the Lord of Hosts, and I will turn to you, saith the Lord of Hosts."[3]

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[1] It is a comfort to know that St. Alphonsus tells us (*Theolog. Mor.*, vi. 36-442) that it is the common teaching of Catholic Theologians that sorrow for all (mortal) sins will justify a sinner without the Sacrament, if it proceed *from even a low degree* of Love of God above all things.

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[1] Sess. 14, cap. 4. [2] John xiv. 12, 23. [3] Zach. i. 3.

The sorrow for sin which springs from a supernatural motive less perfect in kind than the love of God suffices not of itself, but in conjunction with a Sacrament of the New Law, to obtain forgiveness of mortal sin. Were this not so, the words "be baptized for the remission of your sins," or again "whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven them," could never have their effect. For in this case—were no sins to be forgiven without "Perfect Contrition"—all sins would, as we have just seen, be forgiven immediately, and no sins would be forgiven *directly*, either by the Sacrament of Baptism or by the Sacrament of Penance—a conclusion which not only is opposed to the Tradition and Teaching of the Catholic Church, but also renders the words of Holy Scripture meaningless. The Jansenists maintained that sorrow for having offended God and consequent detestation of sin, on account of the supernatural rewards which have been forfeited through sin or of the punishments which Faith discloses that sin has incurred, can never be praiseworthy in the sight of Heaven. Thus to argue seems to me to be lacking in sincerity, or at least to betray a strange forgetfulness both of our human nature as we have received it from our Creator and of the plain teaching of Holy Scripture. We have been so made that by an essential law of our being we desire that which makes us happy and shrink from that which brings us misery. Nor is this in any

Attrition.

way other than it should be. Every man is bound to seek his own well-being not only for his own sake, but also for that of his neighbour, and because such is the Will of God. This duty, far from being ignored, is insisted upon in a hundred places in the Sacred Scriptures. For example, our Lord exhorts us to lay up treasure in Heaven, St. Paul urges us to work out our salvation in fear and trembling, and who that has ever heard it can forget the divine and solemn warning: "Fear ye not him who after he hath killed the body hath no more that he can do. But I will tell whom you shall fear. Fear Him that can cast both body and soul into Hell. Amen I say to you. Fear ye Him."[1]

We should all aim at the highest motive for hating sin. But to forget the motives which concern ourselves directly would be opposed to our sense of reality, as it is certainly contrary to the instincts of the nature which God has bestowed upon us, and to the teaching of the Christian religion as disclosed in the recorded teaching of Christ and His Apostles.

In practice we do well to accustom ourselves to make frequent acts of contrition drawn from a consideration of the various motives suggested to us by our faith, but above all by the thought of the goodness of our Lord. The crucifix—the sight of the Face of Jesus Christ—will always be the most perfect source of sorrow for sin. "The Lord turned to look upon Peter, and he wept bitterly."

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[1] Matt. x. 28.

Nature of the Act of Contrition.

The sorrow for sin, which is a necessary condition of forgiveness, carries with it a firm purpose of giving up that sin, together with a determination to take the necessary steps to attain the end in view. No man really regrets his sin, unless he is resolved at the time to avoid that sin in the future. The act of Contrition is an act in the present, but it looks backwards to the past and forwards to the future. The man who repents is required, at the moment when he seeks forgiveness, to be in the disposition of soul which finds due expression in the words: "My God, I *now* am sorry for having offended Thee;" thus speaking, he looks back upon his past offences, and then forwards to the future: "With Thy Help I will not sin again."

This sorrow for sin has to be full of hope. Otherwise it will be as the sorrow of Judas—the sorrow of despair.

It must also include sorrow for every mortal sin, since we cannot regret any sin with a sorrow that will bring pardon, unless we are ready to break down all our idols, and part with everything that excludes from the Friendship of God. "The Lord our God is a Jealous God and will have no gods beside Him." There is no fellowship between Christ and Satan, between good and evil. The choice is set before each one of us, whom we will have to reign over us and which we shall serve. Such is the dread responsibility of life.

Confession. (*b*) The second necessary part of the Sacrament of Penance is *Confession.* Wherever oral confession is not possible it is otherwise. A deaf mute may write his confession, a sick man, who cannot speak, may beat his heart, or press the priest's hand, or in some other way express contrition, but, where speech is possible, the interior sorrow of the penitent must be externalised through the confession of his lips.

Satisfaction.

(*c*) Holy Scripture bears ample witness to the truth that the consequence of sin is twofold. The soul that has sinned is stained with *guilt* (*culpa*) in the sight of God, and there is also a *punishment* (*pœna*) due to Divine Justice. Thus, Adam sinned and in view of the Merits of the coming Redeemer was forgiven, but was warned that a life of trial was before him to be closed by the great penance—death.[1] David repented and was forgiven when he cried to the Lord "I have sinned," but the punishment due even to his forgiven sin—that his child should die—had to be endured.[2] The sin of Moses was forgiven. The punishment remained. He was not allowed to cross the Jordan and pass into the Land of Promise.[3]

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[1] Gen. iii. 17 ; v. 5.

[2] 2 Kings xii. 13, 14.

[3] Deut. iii. 26, 27 ; xxxiv. 4. *Cf.* Num. x. 26.

In Baptism and Martyrdom the whole punishment of sin is remitted by God together with its guilt.[1] But the Church teaches that this is not always the case in the Sacrament of Penance, where, ordinarily, even after the remission of the guilt of post-Baptismal Sin a debt of punishment remains due, which has to be paid even to the uttermost farthing.[2] This debt can be paid either in Purgatory when this life is over[3] or in this world by what are called Works of *Satisfaction*. Such works consist of suffering inflicted by God and accepted with patience, or of voluntary good works of a penitential character such as prayer, fasting, alms-giving, or other pious practices, above all of those which are enjoined by a Priest in the Sacrament of Penance. These last are commonly called *penances* from the Sacrament of which they constitute an integral part.[4]

In opposition to Catholic doctrine, the Jansenists asserted that Absolution could not be validly given until the penance imposed by the Priest (and Jansenist penances were not light) had been actually performed.[5] It is, however, true that a readiness to make some satisfaction for sin by accepting the sacramental penance is a constituent part of the Sacrament.

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[1] Conc. Trid., sess. 14. [2] Luke xii. 59. [3] *Cf.* p. 505.

[4] Many good works are "indulgenced" by the Church, so that those who perform them and satisfy the prescribed conditions gain an Indulgence, or *direct* pardon of punishment due to post-baptismal sin.

[5] *Cf.* Denzinger, 1173, 1302, 1398.

It remains to consider the Matter, Form, Minister and Subject of this Sacrament.

The Matter of the Sacrament of Penance.

(1) The *Matter* of the Sacrament of Penance differs from that of the other Sacraments in the fact that it does not consist of something, like water, or oil, or bread and wine, or the laying on of another's hands, external to the recipient. For this reason it is called in the Roman Catechism *Quasi-Materia*—that is to say, something which takes the place of Matter, and (in accordance with the opinion of St. Thomas) is stated to consist of the *Acts of the Penitent* which we have just enumerated—the Confession of sin with Sorrow and readiness to make Satisfaction. It must, however, be remembered that although the authority of the Roman Catechism, which was one of the results of the Council of Trent, stands very high, the Fathers of the Council expressly declined to condemn the Scotist opinion on this subject. Scotist theologians, and those who follow them, teach that the Absolution of the Priest, so far as it is something *external*, is the Matter, whilst so far as it signifies *its effect*, it is the Form, of the Sacrament of Penance.

Those who hold that the Acts of the Penitent are the *Quasi-Materia* are accustomed to speak of sins committed after Baptism as the *Remote* Matter of this

Sacrament, in the same way that original sin and actual sins committed before Baptism may be called the Remote Matter of the Sacrament of Baptism. Whatever terminology or view be adopted theoretically, in practice it is certain that excepting in the case of unconsciousness, when Confession is not possible, there can be no valid administration of the Sacrament of Penance unless sin be submitted to the keys—in a "necessary" Confession, every mortal sin not yet confessed; in a "voluntary" Confession, either some venial sin not yet confessed, or (if it be preferred) some sin—at least in general—(whether mortal or venial) already confessed and forgiven. Without confession of sin—where confession of sin be possible—the Sacrament of Penance can no more exist, than can the Sacrament of Baptism without washing with water.

Its Form.

(2) The *Form* of the Sacrament of Penance consists of the Words of Absolution. For many centuries the Form was precatory, as is the case in the Sacrament of Extreme Unction. At present, however, in the West it is direct: "I absolve thee from thy sins." Catholic priests belonging to various Eastern Rites (commonly called Uniats) are free to use either the direct or precatory Form at their discretion.

Its Minister.

(3) The *Minister* of this Sacrament is a Priest who possesses the necessary jurisdiction. These last words stand in need of some

explanation. The Sacrament of Penance is a supernatural Tribunal, where the priest judges in the Name, and by the Authority, of Christ. But no judge has authority to try a case, unless he has been lawfully appointed for the purpose. He requires what is known as jurisdiction. In the supernatural order the Pope has world-wide jurisdiction, and each Diocesan Bishop possesses jurisdiction within the limits of his own Diocese. It follows that the Pope can absolve from sins without limitation as to place or persons, and that a Bishop, in virtue of his office, can absolve his subjects from all sins, excepting those which the Pope may perhaps see fit to reserve to his own Tribunal.

A priest, as such, has received at his Ordination the power to forgive sins. This power, however, is in abeyance, unless he receives authority to exercise it. This authority he may receive from the Pope without limitation of any kind (save that existing by the Law of God), or from a Bishop within the limits of his jurisdiction. Thus a priest will often be heard to say that he has, or has not, "Faculties" to hear Confessions within a certain Diocese, meaning that he has, or has not, received the necessary authorisation from the Bishop. It should be added that every priest, even heretical or schismatical or suspended, has jurisdiction from the Church to absolve from sin any person who is in danger of death in any part of the world.

Its Subject.

(4) The *Subject* of this Sacrament is any Christian who has committed sin after Baptism.

To sum up. The Sacrament of Penance is a most merciful institution of Christ, whereby we may so judge ourselves here that we be not judged hereafter, and may receive, after confession, pardon for our offences, in virtue of His Promise whose Word shall never fail those who trust in Him. With pardon comes a new life, whilst renewed health and strength are bestowed upon the soul to aid it in its future struggles.

CHAPTER XX

THE BLESSED SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR

We now approach with reverence the central Mystery of the Christian religion. The initial Mystery of Christianity is the Incarnation of the Redeemer; its final goal is the Beatific Vision of our God; its very heart and centre is the Blessed Eucharist. Through the Eucharist, the soul born in Baptism, strengthened in Confirmation, haply raised from death in Penance, is nourished with divine Food, the true Body and Blood of its Saviour.

The Divine Food of the Soul.

As the body without nourishment must die, so too the soul. "Unless you eat the Flesh of the Son of Man and drink His Blood you have no life in you." As the life of the body is sustained by Food, so too is the soul, and that Food is Christ. "He that eateth Me, the same shall live by Me."[1] These are the wonderful Words of God. In consequence of the Truth enshrined in these Words, the Apostle was able to exclaim, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."[2]

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[1] John vi. 58.

[2] Gal. ii. 20.

By Baptism Christians are united to Christ and belong to Him, as the several members of our bodies united to one another, are also united, and belong to our several personalities. Jesus Christ is the Life of every Christian who practises his religion. He gives His own Life to His Servants who believe His Word. He gives Himself. "Take ye and eat. This is My Body."[1] And so the Apostle: "I speak unto wise men [that is to say to those who have been initiated in the Christian Mysteries]. Judge ye yourselves what I say. The Chalice of Benediction which we bless—is it not the Communion of the Blood of Christ? And the Bread which we break—is it not the Partaking of the Body of the Lord? For all we, being many, who partake of that One Bread, because the Bread is One, are One Body."[2] There is but One Bread to be the Food of each member of the mystical body of Christ, and that is the One Bread that cometh down from Heaven, the Living Bread —Christ Himself.

The Real Presence.

It is not my present purpose to prove the Catholic doctrine. That doctrine we receive on the testimony of the Church. Moreover, Tradition on the subject is clear. We find that until the sixteenth century the truth of the Real Presence was never denied by Christians.[3] The evidence of

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[1] Matt. xxvi. 26.

[2] 1 Cor. x. 15-17.

[3] The Docetæ, a sect of the second century, denied the reality of the Body in which Christ suffered on the Cross, and, *for this*

Scripture is equally decisive. Indeed so unambiguous are the Words of our Lord and St. Paul on this great Mystery, that it is certain that had they not delivered a "hard saying,"[1] difficult for flesh and blood to receive, their plain meaning would never have been called in question even by the Protestant Reformers.

An attempt has been made to show that when Christ spoke of eating His Flesh and Blood—nay of eating Himself[2]—and when He said "This is My Body," He spoke metaphorically. In support of this contention it has been pointed out that He admittedly thus spoke when He said "I am the True Vine," and again "I am the Door," and it has been argued that these sayings support the contention that "This is My Body" should be understood to mean "This is a sign of My Body," or perhaps "This represents My Body." But to establish the parallel, "I am the True Vine" should mean "I represent, or am a sign of, the True Vine," and "I am the Door" should mean "I represent, or am a sign of, the Door." These are interpretations which will be maintained by nobody. By all the

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reason only, the reality of the Presence of His Body in the Eucharist. They were rebuked for this error by St. Ignatius (*Ad Smyrn.*, vii., cap. 7). Berengarius in the eleventh century denied the Catholic Teaching on the *mode* of Christ's Real Presence. He was condemned at once by the Church, and recanted his error, which faded away.

[1] *Cf.* John vi. 61.

[2] John vi. 58.

laws of exegesis we are only allowed to understand words metaphorically when either their context or the words themselves make it plain that a metaphor is intended. When our Lord said "I am the True Vine," He Himself pointed out the metaphor by the word *true*. He *is* the True Vine as certainly as the Blessed Sacrament *is* His Body. Similarly, a door may mean a door of wood, or it may mean an entrance —a way in. Our Lord *is* the door—the way in to His Father's House. No doubt as to His meaning is possible. On the other hand, no metaphorical meaning can lie under the words *My Body*, and *the Blood which is shed*, whilst the only metaphorical interpretation of eating Flesh and drinking Blood known to the Jews was to calumniate and destroy.[1] Above all, it should never be forgotten that when the Jews deserted our Lord because they understood His words literally and could not accept them, He allowed them to depart, turned to His Apostles, asking "Will you also go away?" and appealed to His future Ascension to show that His Body was not subject to the ordinary Laws of nature.[2] Christ is God and knew that generation after generation of His most faithful disciples would believe His words simply as He spoke those words. If this be an error surely He would have undeceived them, rather than by speech and action have led them astray.

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[1] *Cf.* Psa. xxvi. 2.

[2] John vi. 63.

It may be of some interest to my readers if I direct their attention to one of the various types of the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar which we find in the Old Testament.

The Manna.

We remember that after certain Jews had seen our Lord multiply five loaves before their eyes, so that after five thousand men had eaten, His disciples "gathered up and filled twelve baskets with the fragments that remained,"[1] they sought Him out, and in the end asked Him: "What shall we do that we may work the Works of God?" And Jesus answered them: "This is the Work of God, that you believe in Him whom God hath sent."[2] When met with this challenge to faith, the Jews reminded Him of the manna, the bread from Heaven that their fathers had eaten in the desert.[3] It seems that they intended to signify their unwillingness to leave Moses for Christ—the old teacher for the new—unless Christ should work some miracle more wonderful than that granted through Moses to their fathers. But Christ said to them: "Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness and are dead. I am the Bread of Life. This is the Bread which cometh down from Heaven, that if any man eat of it, he may not die. If any man shall eat of this Bread, he shall live for ever, and the Bread that I will give is My Flesh for the Life of the world."[4]

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[1] John vi. 13. [2] *Ibid.*, 28, 29. [3] *Ibid.*, 30. [4] *Ibid.*, 48-52.

There is here a parallelism which is suggested by the very words of Christ. As the Jews during their passage through the wilderness to the Land of Promise received for their *bodily* life miraculous bread called manna, that seemed to come down from Heaven, so should Christians as they make their earthly pilgrimage to the heavenly country be supported in their *spiritual* life by the true Manna, the Body of their divine Lord Himself, given for the life of the world.

"And the children of Israel ate manna forty years, till they came to a habitable land: with this meat were they fed, until they reached the borders of the land of Chanaan."[1]

The Children of Israel, God's chosen people of the Old Law, are the type of Christians under the New Law.

The journey through the desert to the "habitable land" is the type of our journey to God's Paradise.

The forty years are the type of the days of our mortality.

The Manna from Heaven that gave life to the body, but could not stave off death, is the type of the Bread of Life—the Bread from Heaven that gives life to the soul—the Food of Immortality.

The Creed of Pope Pius IV. teaches us to make the following Profession of our Faith: I believe that "in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist there is truly, really and substantially the Body and Blood together with the Soul and Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that there takes place a conversion of the whole substance of the bread into His Body, and of the whole substance of the wine into His Blood—a conversion which the Catholic Church calls Transubstantiation." In virtue of the Words "*This is My Body*," the bread is changed by the Power of God into the Body of Christ, and in virtue of the Words "*This is My Blood*," the wine is changed into the Blood of Christ. But Christ having died once dieth now no more. His Body and His Blood are now inseparable. Where His Body is there also is His Blood, and where His Blood is there is His Body, together with His Human Soul and His Divinity. It is the Living Christ whom we adore beneath the Sacramental veils and receive as the Food of our souls in Holy Communion.

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[1] Exod. xvi. 35.

Transubstantiation.

It has been objected that the word *Transubstantiation* is not found in the Holy Scriptures, but was coined, at the time of the controversy with Berengarius, purposely in order to express the Catholic Doctrine. This is true, but it is true also of such words as *Homoousios* (of one substance), *Trinity*, *Incarnation*. When a revealed Truth is impugned by heresy the Church has been accustomed not only to define that truth in its integrity, but also to find some word which will crystallise it, so that the word itself becomes a Catholic word, the badge and safeguard of the Faith itself. If a man rejects the word *Trinity*, he denies thereby that there are Three Persons in God; if he rejects the word *Transubstantiation*, he denies that in the Eucharist the substance of the bread is changed into the Body, and the substance of the wine into the Blood of Jesus Christ.[1]

Substance and Accidents.

The word *Substance* is employed in the Aristotelian philosophy for that which underlies appearances and constitutes a thing that which it really is; the word *Accidents* is employed for its appearances as distinct from its inward essence. It is not the case that the Church is committed by her use of these terms to a belief that the Aristotelian philosophy is absolutely true; the terms are merely used as the most suitable which could be found to express with precision the revealed Truth that the whole of that which made the bread bread and the wine wine is changed by God into the Body and Blood of His Son, the appearances of bread and wine remaining unchanged.

It follows that this change is hidden and sacramental. No man can prove it excepting by Faith in Christ; on the other hand no man can disprove it.

The senses do not deceive us, they report solely as to the appearances, and their report is true.

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[1] *Cf.* p. 280.

"Gustus, Tactus, Visus in Te fallitur ;
Auditu solo tuto creditur."

Though Taste, Touch, Sight fail to tell us that He is in His Sacrament, safely do we trust our Hearing, for He has said: "This is My Body," and we are content to hear and believe His Word. "Faith cometh by Hearing, and Hearing by the Word of Christ."[1]

It has often been objected by Protestants that God is everywhere present, and that therefore the Real Presence of His Sacred Humanity is superfluous. To this Father Bridgett in *The Ritual of the New Testament* replies as follows, reminding us of the Shechinah—a special Presence of God—which is a type of the Blessed Sacrament:

> "How many beautiful histories are related in the Old Testament of the devotion of God's people to His Presence in the Ark whether preserved in the Tabernacle or the Temple! It localised without circumscribing their thoughts of God. It was the source of no error. It did not make them think of God as the heathens thought of their idols; though Moses could well say to them, 'There is not any other nation so great, that hath gods so nigh them, as our God is present to all our petitions.'[2] At the dedication of the Temple Solomon prays, 'Is it then to be thought that God should indeed dwell upon earth? For if heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee, how much less this house which I have built?'[3] But though this particular

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[1] Rom. x. 17.

[2] Deut. iv. 7.

[3] 3 Kings viii. 27.

Presence of God produced no error regarding His divine nature, it impressed on the Jews in a wonderful manner the sense of God's providence over them, and His peculiar love for them, and it inspired them with a filial confidence in their necessities.

"I will choose, from among many, one illustration of these truths, and of the manner of devotion of the Jews to the Presence of God.

"When Ezechias received the insulting letter of Rabsaces, 'he went up to the house of the Lord, and spread it before the Lord, and He prayed in His sight, saying: O Lord God of Israel, who sittest upon the Cherubim, Thou alone art the God of all the kings of the earth: Thou madest heaven and earth: incline Thine ear, and hear: open, O Lord, Thine eyes, and see: and hear all the words of Sennacherib.'[1]

"Certainly Ezechias believed in the omnipresence of God, 'who made heaven and earth.' Why, then, did he not pray in his own palace? Why, if he must *show* God the letter, did he go and spread it in the Temple? It would be easy to find a parallel to this Biblical scene in the devotion of Catholics. Let my reader enter any day into a Catholic church, at an hour when no public service is being carried on, and I doubt not he will see some poor man making his 'visit' to the Blessed Sacrament, with a faith and confidence, and external devotion, just like that of Ezechias, though he may never have heard of the name of the Jewish king, or of the Jewish Temple in which he prayed. But I must continue the history of God's Presence.

"The Ark of the Covenant has long since disappeared. The Jewish historian Josephus informs us that shortly before the destruction of the Temple, those who ministered at the altar heard mysterious voices from behind the veil, saying, 'Let us depart!' as if God was removing from the Jews His sensible Presence for ever. But, before the Temple was destroyed, a far different Presence of God had come down on earth. 'The Word had been made Flesh, and dwelt among us.' This was the Presence announced of old by the prophets. It was the foreknowledge of this Presence which made Isaias break forth into the words, 'You shall say in that day, Praise ye the Lord, and call upon His name; make known His works among the people: rejoice and praise, O thou habitation of Sion, for great is He that is in the midst of thee, the Holy One of Israel.'[1]"[2]

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[1] 4 Kings xix. 14-16.

Our Lord's Presence Sacramental.

When we first become acquainted with the Catholic doctrine of the Real Presence, considerable difficulty is likely to be felt in consequence of the fact that the Body of our Lord is present simultaneously in so many places all over the world.[3] This difficulty, however, will cease to trouble our minds (as distinct from our imaginations) when we remember that the Body of Christ is present in the Eucharist, not after the fashion of an earthly body (to use a philosophical expression) with "its parts extended," but transcendentally, sacramentally, "spirit-wise." Concerning the conditions of a body in this state (St. Paul writes of the risen body as a *spiritual* body) we know little if anything, and certainly it can never be proved that its presence in many places involves a contradiction. Indeed the relation of matter to space is one of the obscurest of those questions concerning which scientific men dispute amongst themselves.

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[1] Isa. xii. 4-6.

[2] *Ritual of the New Testament*, pp. 140-142.

[3] St. Thomas teaches that our Lord is not present in the Eucharist, *tanquam in loco*. But in English we are forced to write loosely of His being present "*in many places*," or "*in the Tabernacle*," since we have no English word that will express the truth of the Sacramental Presence with philosophical precision. The Italians speak of *Gesu sacramentato*.

There is a kindred difficulty as to how the Body of Christ can exist within the compass of a small fragment of a Host. But "this difficulty," writes Father Hunter, "is based on a vain conviction that we are acquainted with the laws of space, and that what commonly happens in the course of nature must necessarily be always true, even when God is pleased to act miraculously. There is no ground for this conviction, as they who are most conversant with the subject are most thoroughly assured. It is common to meet with a multiplying mirror, where a man may see the perfect image of himself twenty times over in the space of a few inches. When a blind man is assured by his companion that he was thus multiplied and diminished, he would be rash and wrong if he disbelieved the word spoken to him; but the man born blind is not more ignorant of light than are the acutest reasoners on earth ignorant of the true nature of space."[1]

We may now leave the consideration of difficulties and proceed to state the Catholic Doctrine as to the Matter, Form, Minister and Subject of this august Sacrament.

Matter of the Sacrament of the Eucharist.

The *Proximate Matter* consists of the species themselves which stand for the Body and Blood of Christ. The *Remote Matter* consists of Bread and Wine of the grape. Unleavened bread is prescribed in the West; leavened bread in the East, including the Eastern Churches in communion with the Holy See. The use of unleavened bread has arisen from the fact that our Lord undoubtedly used this kind of bread at the institution of the Eucharist; the use of ordinary bread is based upon the Oriental tradition that such was the usage of the Apostles when offering the Holy Sacrifice. From earliest antiquity a few drops of water have been added to the wine in the chalice. This ceremony is based upon the fact that at the Last Supper our Lord used a cup in which a little water, according to the Jewish custom, had been added to the wine. It also conveys much mystic teaching, serving to remind us for example of the water which gushed forth from the Sacred Side of our Saviour together with His Precious Blood, symbolising the Union of Human Nature with the Divine in His One Person, and teaching us that in our natural weakness we can only obtain the spiritual force we need by union with Him who is our strength, even as the weak water becomes one with the wine with which it is mingled.

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[1] *Outlines of Dogmatic Theology*, vol. iii., pp. 255, 256.

Its Form.

(*b*) The *Form* of the Sacrament of the Eucharist consists of the words of consecration. These sacred words uttered by the priest as a narrator, but as the representative of Christ, effect what they express, and determine the species to their sacramental being and condition.[1]

Its Minister.

(*c*) Its *Minister* is a Priest, who by ordination obtains power to consecrate the Body and Blood of Christ. In the case of the Holy Eucharist there is a distinction (not to be found in any other Sacrament) between the Sacrament which is to be "made" (*Conficiendum*) and the Sacrament which has been already made (*Confectum*) but has to be "*administered*." In the latter case (the *administration* of Holy Communion) when there is necessity—as in times of persecution—it is lawful for a layman to give Communion to another or even to communicate himself. This distinction has to be carefully borne in mind when we consider the question of *communion under one kind*, or as it is often with much inaccuracy termed by Protestants "The Denial of the Cup to the Laity."

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[1] For a discussion on the subject of the *Epiclesis*, which has never been considered necessary for the Consecration, *cf.* Bishop Hedley, *The Holy Eucharist*, pp. 78-80 (in *The Westminster Library*).

According to Catholic Doctrine the Sacrament of the Eucharist is "made" during the offering of the Sacrifice of the Mass. It is absolutely necessary that this holy Sacrifice should be offered by the double Consecration of bread and wine. This is of the very essence of the Sacrifice. Otherwise there is no Sacrifice. The double Consecration in the offering of the Christian Sacrifice is of the Institution of Christ. But after the Sacrament has been "made," it remains that it should be distributed to the Faithful. Now, here what is essential, and according to the will of Christ, is—not that bread and wine, but that His Adorable Body and Most Precious Blood, hidden under a sacramental appearance, be received as Food for the soul. It belongs to the Catholic Faith to believe that, where the Body of Christ is, there also is His Precious Blood—there is Christ Himself. Any separation of His Body and Blood can no longer be *real*, as in the days of His mortality when He offered Himself upon the Altar of the Cross.[1] Such separation now, in the days of His glorified Life, can only be *mystical*, as in the double Consecration during the offering of the Holy Mass.[1] Therefore, is it that immediately after our Lord had said that we were to eat His Flesh and drink His Blood, He summed up His divine teaching in the words: "*He that eateth Me*, shall live by Me."[2] In accordance with His heavenly doctrine (heavenly in truth, for He is "the Bread that cometh down from Heaven," and the eating of this Bread of Life is to be after a heavenly and sacramental manner) St. Paul wrote: "Whosoever shall eat this Bread, *or* drink this Cup unworthily is guilty of the Body *and* Blood of the Lord."[3] In the Eucharist it is impossible to eat Christ's Body without at the same time drinking Christ's Blood—without at the same time receiving Himself into our souls. For, His Body and His Blood are inseparable—not merely from one another, but also from His Human created soul and from the Divinity, to which His Sacred Humanity is hypostatically united. When we receive the Blessed Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ under either species we receive Christ Himself. And this Sacramental reception of Christ is the end of this Sacrament considered *as a Sacrament*. The *mode* in which this end—the sacramental reception of the Body and Blood of Christ—is to be effected is a matter of discipline, and as such is liable to change according to the various requirements of various times and places, and has therefore been left by our Lord to be regulated according to the discretion of His Church.[1] As the mode of administering the Sacrament of Baptism has changed, so also has the mode of administering the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ. All Catholics, because they *are* Catholics, know that the essence of the Sacraments (which the Church has no power to change) has been preserved—that essence being in the one case a symbolic washing of the body to denote the washing of the soul, in the other case the gift to the regenerated soul of Christ Himself hidden as sacramental Food. This Food comes from, and is part of, the Sacrifice in which He offers Himself upon our altars under the appearance of bread and wine in the exercise of His Priesthood after the Order of Melchisedech. Space will not permit me to discuss at any length the history of the manner of administering the Sacrament of the Altar, though I have thought it well briefly to state the principles which govern that administration in the Catholic Church. Suffice it to say that at first (as scholars are perfectly agreed) Communion was ordinarily given under both kinds, but that when there was any reason (as for example when in times of persecution the Faithful were allowed to take the

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[1] *Cf.* Rom. vi. 9.

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[1] *Cf.* p. 442.

[2] John vi. 56, 57.

[3] I Cor. xi. 27. In the A.V. the crucial word OR has been changed to *and* in the first of these antithetical sentences. This very serious mistake has been, as we should expect, corrected in the R.V.

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[1] *Cf.* p. 381.

Blessed Sacrament to their own homes and communicate themselves privately). It was received under one kind only. It became, however, very difficult to give Communion even in the public churches reverently from the Chalice to large numbers of people, so that gradually the custom grew, in the East, of communicating the people with the Sacred Host that had previously been soaked in the Chalice and then dried; in the West, with the Sacred Host alone. When this authorised custom was challenged by heretics, as being against the Will of Christ and the purpose of the Sacrament, a *doctrinal* question was at once involved. In order to make the Catholic doctrine clear it was solemnly defined by the Council of Constance against the Hussite heresy that the custom of receiving Holy Communion under the species of Bread alone "was reasonably introduced to avoid danger and scandal, since all must believe without doubting that the whole Body and Blood of Christ is truly contained as well under the species of Bread as under that of Wine." This pronouncement is referred to by the Council of Trent, which reasserts the decree with great emphasis."[1] I hope that I have made it clear that the distinction is not, as Protestants so often imagine, between "the Priests and the Laity." The distinction is not between priest and people, but between the priest who is saying Mass and all others—be they who they may—who receive the *Sacrament* of the Body and Blood of Christ without at the same time offering the Holy Sacrifice. The Pope in illness receives Communion under one kind in the same manner as does the layman.

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[1] Sess. xxi., cap. 1, 2, 3. Cer. 1, 2, 3.

Its Subject.

(*d*) Its *Subject* is a Christian in the state of grace. St. Paul has stated how terrible were the results of sacrilegious communion even in Apostolic days.[1] Moreover the Council of Trent has made a positive law, requiring anyone whose conscience is burdened by mortal sin, "however contrite he may think himself," to seek Absolution in the Sacrament of Penance, before daring to present himself to receive the Bread of Life. Even though an Act of Perfect Contrition may have been made, the sacramental Confession must not be delayed until after Communion. The risk of receiving the Body of the Lord unworthily would be too great. At the same time, it is true that if a man, unhappily in the state of mortal sin were *by no fault of his own* to receive Communion without Confession but with supernatural sorrow (even the sorrow of Attrition)[2] for his sins, he would thereby receive pardon, according to the principle that under such circumstances the Sacraments of the Living, and especially this greatest of all the Sacraments, confer justifying grace. Such a case might arise, for example, if a mortal sin had been completely forgotten, and there honestly seemed to the communicant that there was no necessity for Confession. Under such circumstances he would approach Communion in good dispositions and enter anew into Friendship with God.

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[1] *Cf.* 1 Cor. xi. 30.

[2] *Cf.* p. 405.

Its Effects.

It remains very briefly to sum up the ordinary effects of the Sacrament of the Eucharist. Let me say once more that its distinctive work is (so we are taught by the Council of Florence) to nourish the soul as bread nourishes the body. This work of nourishment is effected by increasing habitual grace and strengthening the virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity, as well as the Gifts of the Holy Ghost, within the soul of the recipient. Again, as food is most closely united with him who receives it, so, similarly, by the Heavenly Bread of the Eucharist are we most closely united to our Lord and, through union with our Lord, in Him to one another. For this reason this Sacrament is called so often Holy *Communion*. By the reception of Holy Communion man is gradually transformed into the likeness of Christ by Charity, as the bread is transformed into Christ Himself through the operation of the Holy Ghost. Now, it is this transformation to the likeness of Christ which especially brings about our union with one another in the One body of His Church. "[As] there is One Bread," writes St. Paul, "so we, though many, are One body, because we all share in the One

Bread."[1] "O Sacrament of Goodness! O Sign of Unity!" writes St. Augustine, "O Bond of Charity!"[2]

Whereas it is the property of food often to give health to the sick (though it does not restore life to the dead), so does the divine Food of this Blessed Sacrament forgive those venial sins which correspond to the daily waste of the body. By the reception of Holy Communion our passions are curbed, we are strengthened against temptation and helped wondrously to practise virtue. In the words of the Catechism of the Council of Trent: "All that bread and wine do for the body is done by this Sacrament for the well-being and delight of the soul, and that in a better and most perfect fashion. The Sacrament is not indeed changed into our substance as are bread and wine, but we are in a certain manner changed into it; so that the words of St. Augustine may be here applied: "I am the Food of the grown-up; grow and thou shalt eat Me, and thou shalt not transmute Me into thyself, but thou shalt be changed into Me." Above all is the reception of the Body and Blood of our Lord the pledge of our immortality. "He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood *hath* everlasting Life, and I will raise him up at the last day." This is the promise of Christ Himself.

O Sacrum convivium in quo Christus sumitur, mens repletur gratia et futuræ gloriæ nobis pignus datur!

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[1] 1 Cor. x. 17.

[2] *In Joan* xxv. 13.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS

"He hath made a remembrance of His wonderful works, being a merciful and gracious Lord. He hath given food to them that fear Him."[1] In these words, first written of the manna, the Psalmist anticipates the Bread of Life given to Christians in the Blessed Sacrament. But the Holy Eucharist is not only a Sacrament whereby, under the appearances of bread and wine, Christ gives Himself as spiritual Food to nourish the souls of His people; it is also a sacrifice in which, under the same appearances, He offers Himself to God as the propitiation for the sins of the world.

The idea of sacrifice.

To develop at any length the idea and history and theology of sacrifice does not lie within the scope of this book. Suffice it to say that when man begins to think about his relations with God there will often arise within his heart a desire to recognise the dominion of the Supreme Being, as Lord of Life and Death, by the offering and immolation of a Victim. We should not therefore be surprised to find in all the records of antiquity traces of sacrifices offered to God in every part of the world. Now, the Bible teaches us that to this natural sense of the fitness of sacrifice, there was added a supernatural sanction and blessing.[1] Furthermore, when sin came into the world sacrifice was required not only in order to recognise the Dominion of God, but also to make satisfaction for the offences of men. And the Divine Revelation given to the Jews commanded them to offer various sacrifices—all of which were to typify and to look forward to the One perfect Sacrifice that, in the fulness of time, was to be made by the Redeemer of Mankind.

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[1] Ps. cx. 45.

The Sacrifice offered by Christ.

It is the Catholic Doctrine that—to quote the words of the Council of Trent: "Our Lord Jesus Christ was ordained by God as a Priest according to the Order of Melchisedech, to bring to perfection what was wanting to the ancient Testament. Accordingly, He wrought our Redemption once for all by His Cross. But, because His Priesthood was to continue for ever, and in order to leave to His Beloved Spouse, the Catholic Church, a visible Sacrifice, by which the bloody Sacrifice of the Cross might be represented, and the memory thereof kept up until the end of time—in order, moreover, that its saving efficacy might be applied to the remission of our daily sins, He, on the night before He suffered, offered His Body and Blood under the *species* of Bread and Wine to God the Father, and commanded His Apostles and their successors to offer as He Himself had done. . . . This is that pure oblation predicted by Malachy, and not obscurely referred to by St. Paul in the phrase "the Table of the Lord."[1]

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[1] *Cf.* Heb xi. 4.

This Sacrifice of our Altars—the Sacrifice of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ—of our Lord Jesus Christ Himself—under the sacramental species—we call the Divine Mysteries, or the Eucharist, or, most usually, the Mass.

Christ a priest after the order of Melchisedech.

In this Sacrifice Christ is both Priest and Victim, offering Himself through the ministry of those to whom He has communicated a share in His Priesthood. He is said to be a Priest according to the Order of Melchisedech.[2] But of Melchisedech we read that "he brought forth bread and wine, for he was the Priest of the Most High God."[3] Melchisedech brought forth bread and wine for the Sacrifice, which he offered to God as a type of the Christian Sacrifice; Christ, the Priest after the Order of Melchisedech, provided the same material for the antitype—the Sacrifice, which He left to His Church—when He gave to His Apostles (and in their persons to their successors in the Christian Priesthood) the great commission, "Do this for a commemoration of Me"—that is, "Offer this Sacrifice as My Memorial."[1]

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[1] Sess. xxii., cap. i.-ix.

[2] *Cf.* Ps. cix. 4; Heb. vi. 20.

[3] Gen. xiv. 18.

The Council of Trent reminds us that the Sacrifice of the Christian Altar was "predicted by Malachy and not obscurely referred to by St. Paul."

The Prophecy of Malachy.

The prophecy of Malachy is very remarkable. Having rebuked the priests of his own time for their avarice and other vices, the last of the Hebrew prophets proceeds as follows:

"From the rising of the sun even to the going down thereof, My Name shall be great amongst the Gentiles, and in every place there shall be Sacrifices, and there shall be offered to My Name a pure Oblation; for My Name shall be great amongst the Gentiles, saith the Lord of Hosts."[2]

The Jewish sacrifices were limited as to time and place, but the Prophet declares that the new Sacrifice which was to come was to know no such limits. It was to be offered not in Jerusalem alone, but "in every place"; not only at one time of the day, but at every moment "from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof." This has been verified in the most striking manner in the Sacrifice of the Eucharist, which is offered all over the world, and at every moment of time in some part of the world. It is literally true that "from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof" Mass is being somewhere said —if not in New Zealand, then in Britain, if not in China or America, then in Jerusalem or Rome. But even before the prophecy of Malachy had, through the spread of Christianity, been thus wonderfully and literally fulfilled, it was understood by the earliest Ecclesiastical witness to refer to the Christian Sacrifice. For example, in the first century, in the *Didache*, or *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, the Eucharist is declared to be the pure oblation or sacrifice (*καθαρὰ θυσία*) which was "to be offered every moment and in every place,"[1] and the words of Malachy are quoted textually from the Septuagint Version. In the second century St. Justin,[2] St. Irenæus[3] and Tertullian all connect the Sacrifice of the Eucharist with the Prophecy of Malachy. For example, Tertullian writes: "For the well-being of the Emperor we offer Sacrifice to Him who is our God and his,"[4] and gives as one of the reasons for which women may leave their houses "when either Sacrifice is offered, or the Word of God is preached."[5]

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[1] Luke xxii. 19: *Τοῦτο ποιεῖτε εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν.* Ποιεῖτε and *ἀνάμνησιν* are both sacrificial words used here in a sacrificial setting. *Cf. The Mustard Tree*, p. 289 n.

[2] Mal. i. 11.

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[1] Chapter xiv.

[2] Migne, P.G., vi. 745-749.

[3] *Adv. Hær.*, xvii. 5.

[4] *Ad Scapulam*, ii. 2: "Sacrificamus pro salute Imperatoris, sed Deo nostro et ipsius."

[5] *De cultu Fœmin.*, cap. vii.: "Aut sacrificium offertur, aut verbum Dei administratur."

With reference to the Prophecy of Malachy he points out that the Christian Sacrifice is universal, perpetual, and identical everywhere.[1]

St. Paul and the Sacrifice of the Eucharist.

The Council of Trent teaches us also that the Eucharistic Sacrifice "is not obscurely referred to by St. Paul in the phrase 'The Table of the Lord.'" The reference here is to the well-known passage in his First Epistle to the Corinthians, where St. Paul is arguing that by eating of the flesh of a sacrifice a man partook in the sacrifice itself, and that therefore it was unlawful for a Christian to partake of the Pagan sacrificial banquets. He writes as follows: "The Chalice of Benediction which we bless, is it not the Communion of the Blood of Christ? The Bread which we break is it not the Communion of the Body of Christ? You cannot drink the Cup of the Lord and the Cup of devils; you cannot share *the Table of the Lord and the Table of Devils*."[2] The Table of Devils was the Pagan altar on which the Pagan sacrifice was offered to the false gods (called Devils by the Apostle), and thence distributed to the assemblage. St. Paul's whole argument loses its force, and breaks down, unless the *Table of the Lord* is the Christian Altar on which the Christian Sacrifice is offered to the True God and thence distributed to the Christian people.

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[1] *Adv. Marcion*, iii. 22.

[2] Cor. x. 15 *seq.*

The relation of the Sacrifice of the Altar to the Sacrifice of the Cross.

The Sacrifice of the Mass derives all its efficacy from the Sacrifice of the Cross, which it renews unto the end of time. Indeed, the Council of Trent teaches that the one Sacrifice is identical with the other, inasmuch as in each case the chief offerer and the Victim are the same, and the difference lies only in the *manner* of offering. On the Cross our Lord died really; on the Altar our Lord, through the mystical separation in the twofold Consecration, dies mystically. On both Cross and Altar He offers Himself to God His Father.

The Essence of the Sacrifice of the Altar.

There is considerable discussion amongst Catholic Theologians as to wherein precisely consists the essence of the Sacrifice of the Mass. On this subject the Church has decided nothing, and consequently we can have no certainty. Very great names (such as those of Cardinal De Lugo[1] and Cardinal Franzelin) may be quoted for the opinion that the essence of the Sacrifice is to be found in the state of humiliation and quasi-annihilation in which our Lord voluntarily places Himself as a Victim beneath the sacramental Veils; but I venture diffidently to think that the weight of authority and theological reasoning inclines somewhat to the view that it lies rather in the twofold Consecration. In this twofold Consecration, whereby first the Adorable Body and then the Precious Blood of our Divine Lord are laid upon His Altar, we have a mystic representation of the real separation of His Body and Blood upon the Cross, and thus most wondrously "do we show forth His Death until He come."[1]

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[1] Of De Lugo St. Alphonsus writes: "Theologorum post Divum Thomam facile princeps."

There is also free discussion amongst Theologians as to whether the Priest's Communion is necessary for the *completion*, or only for the *integrity* of the Sacrifice. The latter opinion seems to me to be the more probable, especially if we hold that the Sacrifice of the Mass consists essentially in the Consecration of our Lord's Body and Blood, of which the term no doubt is meant to be reception by the priest, just as the Sacrifice of the Cross essentially consisted in the outpouring of His Blood from His Body on Mount Calvary, culminating in actual dissolution.

The Holy Mass the great Act of Christian Worship.

But whatever view we are inclined to take theoretically concerning matters which in these tremendous Mysteries are left open by the Church for reverent discussion, all Catholics are agreed as to their practice. All are agreed that as our Lord's Offering of Himself during the three hours whilst He remained lifted up and hanging upon the Cross may be looked upon as one sacrificial Act, so may the whole Service of the Mass be spoken of without inaccuracy as the Holy Sacrifice.

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[1] 1 Cor. xi. 26.

The principal parts of the Mass.

In this great Sacrifice there are three principal parts, undoubtedly necessary—at least for its integrity: *The Offertory* or presentation of bread and wine as gifts to God; *the Consecration* or changing of these Gifts of ours into His Gift to us—the Bread that cometh down from Heaven; *the Communion* or reception by the visible earthly priest who stands in the place of the Heavenly Priest, who is invisible. Round about the Offertory, the Consecration and the Communion in the Mass are grouped prayers of great antiquity and beauty, and round about the Central Action are ranged lesser actions rich with venerable symbolism.

And yet, when a stranger to the Catholic Faith enters a Catholic Church and is present at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, all that he sees and hears usually fills him with perplexity. He will say: "I can understand nothing. There is nothing here in which I can join." The idea of a Protestant Englishman with regard to a religious service is always that of prayers and hymns in which he can "join." He has no conception when he goes to church of "joining" in an Action. "But, Mary,' said a lady recently—the wife of an Oxford Don—to a girl who had just become a Catholic; "But, Mary, how *could* you do it? You do not know Latin. It was different with my sister—perhaps you have heard that she has just become 'a Roman' too—

she, you see, had learned Latin." And then to herself (meditatively): "Perhaps she learned it on purpose."

I myself was assured as a child that "the Roman Catholics" had their services in Latin in order to keep their people in ignorance. I remember perfectly well feeling quite sure at the time that this was nonsense and that "the Roman Catholics" must have some very good reason for what certainly seemed queer and unreasonable; I also remember wanting badly to find out what that reason was.

If then any person who is not a Catholic wishes to understand the inwardness of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and to know something of what it means to the Faithful who are present, he must bear carefully in mind that the Mass is something which is being *done*. The Priest is *doing* it as he was commanded—he is *acting*—in the Person and in memory of Christ. The Mass is a great Action. The Faithful are assisting and are joining their prayers to those of our Lord and of His Priest. It is not in any way *necessary* (however satisfactory it may be to some people) to understand the meaning of the words which the priest is using as he offers the Sacrifice. It is sufficient for them to pray to God in their own tongue, each according to the devotion which God gives him.

There are two great reasons for offering the Sacrifice of the Mass in the West in Latin. (i.) The Church is ancient, not modern; but spoken languages are exposed to constant variation of meaning. It is, therefore, important that the Liturgy should be enshrined in a dead language which as such is not liable to change. (ii.) The Church is Catholic, not National. It is therefore important to secure as far as possible that her children sojourning in foreign cities should not be perplexed at Mass by the sounds of a tongue with which they are not familiar.

Various methods of hearing Mass.

There are various methods of assisting at the Holy Sacrifice. It is possible to follow the very words of the sacred Liturgy used by the priest at the Altar, since prayer-books are published in every language, containing those words in Latin and the vernacular in parallel columns; or it is possible during the Mass to meditate on the Passion which is being represented before our eyes, or on some other Mystery of the Life of Christ; or we may read some book of devotion, from time to time withdrawing our attention from the book to the great Action in which we are taking part, as the bell warns us of its solemn progress; or we may deliberately offer the Mass for the four great ends of Sacrifice—Worship, Thanksgiving, Satisfaction for sin, and Impetration—according to the well-known advice of St. Leonard of Port Maurice; or we may simply keep our thoughts fixed, as best we may, on God in whose Presence we are.

After all, the most perfect representatives of Christian worshippers will ever remain Mary, Mother of our Lord, and the holy women who, with the Disciple whom Jesus loved, were privileged to remain beneath His Cross. During those three dread Hours we do not read that our Lady and the Magdalene and St. John joined together in any set form of words. In the very Presence of the Divine Victim, through Him, each worshipped God under the influence of His Holy Spirit, in the soul's inmost sanctuary, and was silent before the Lord, whilst that Lord offered Himself for the sins of the world.

Hymns and joint prayers and litanies and Scripture readings have their place, but all such spoken words yield in importance to the offering of the heart, whether that heart be sinless, as the Heart of the Immaculate, or broken and humbled like the heart of the woman that had been a sinner—an offering God will not despise—an offering made in conscious union with the One Offering of His Son. This is indeed the Worship of the Father in spirit and in truth, made not in one place only, but in every land on which the sun shall rise. And the Father seeketh such to worship Him.

Any man who will remember that we can learn nothing that is worth learning without some little trouble, may learn far more quickly than he may think possible, either from books or from some Catholic friend, the main principles as regards the structure of the service of the Mass, so that he may be present at that service (though he know not the meaning of one Latin word), with intelligence as well as with joy and much contentment of spirit. If anyone question this, let him watch the little children and the poor old men and women hearing Mass in any Catholic Church. He cannot doubt, as he watches, that they at least rejoice and are content—that they understand substantially what the priest is doing, and also understand with much intelligence what they themselves are doing too. That which the little children can do and the very poor, an ordinary educated Englishman can learn to do also, *if he will only set to work to TRY.*

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass fulfils perfectly the four great ends of Sacrifice—(*a*) to adore God, (*b*) to thank Him for all His benefits, (*c*) to propitiate Him for our sins, and (*d*) to beseech His blessings for all mankind.

The Sacrifice of the Mass Latreutic.

(*a*) I have already called attention to the fact that every sacrifice is essentially a protestation of God's supreme dominion and of man's dependence upon Him, and is therefore an act of worship. In the Mass this worship is offered by our Lord Himself in His Sacred Humanity. It is this sublime fact which has led St. Alphonsus to remind us that one Mass gives more glory to God than the Blessed Virgin and all the Saints and Angels have ever given Him in time or can ever give Him for all Eternity. This thought is indeed wonderful, yet it is most certainly true, for our Lady and the Saints can only give their Lord a worship which is *finite*—the worship of creatures In the Mass the Son of Man renders His Father the homage of one who Himself is Infinite. The distance between the Finite and the Infinite is immeasurable. From this point of view the Sacrifice of the Mass is called *Latreutic*—that is to say, it gives to God the worship due to Him alone, which is called *Latria.*

And Eucharistic.

(*b*) The Mass is also *Eucharistic* or the Sacrifice of Thanksgiving. Indeed we are told expressly that our Lord did not institute the Sacrifice until He had given thanks.[1] In the Mass, with and through His Divine Son, we are enabled worthily to thank our Father in Heaven for the various gifts of soul and body which He has bestowed upon ourselves and all who are dear to us on earth, upon the Holy souls in Purgatory, upon His Blessed Mother and all His Saints in Heaven. Thus, though we offer the Sacrifice to God only, we may say Mass in honour of our Lady or the Saints, and may in the Mass beseech God for their intercession on our behalf.

(*c*) As the Council of Trent has expressly defined, the Sacrifice of the Mass is *Propitiatory*, for in the

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[1] Luke xxii. 19.

Mass we offer to God Him who made atonement for our sins on Calvary. Through the offering of this great Sacrifice venial sins are directly forgiven not only as regards the punishment which is due on their account, but also as regards their guilt. We know that this is not the case with mortal sins, the guilt of which is remitted in the Sacrament of Penance, not by the Holy Mass. In virtue, however, of this Sacrifice, sinners obtain the grace of sorrow for even the most enormous sins, whereby they may obtain the necessary dispositions to seek forgiveness of those sins in the Sacrament that God has appointed for the purpose.

And Propitiatory.

In this sense it is that, as the Council of Trent expresses it, not only remission of punishment but also forgiveness of sins is obtained for those who "with a true heart and right faith, with fear and reverence, contrite and penitent approach to God."[1]

Indeed our Lord Himself expressly declares that in the Eucharist His Blood is poured out for the remission of sin.[2]

(*d*) The Sacrifice of the Mass is called *Impetratory*, because through our Lord Jesus Christ here present, and for His Sake, we can with much confidence beg all graces and blessings for the Living and the Dead. The Mass is a long drawn Scroll of pleading held up between earth and heaven on behalf of sinful men, expressing by its very action the cry to the Throne of God—*Per Dominum Nostrum Jesum Christum*—through Jesus Christ our Lord. By Him, and by Him alone, we have access to the Throne of Grace. On that Scroll we may write, without pens but in our hearts, what petitions we will, and God will hear us according to our needs for the sake of His Son truly lifted up on His Holy Altar.

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[1] Sess. xxii. 2.

[2] Matt. xxvi. 28; Mark xiv. 24; Luke xii. 20. It should be noted that in the Vulgate we have *effundetur*, the future tense, but in the original Greek the tense is present. The three Gospels have the same word ἐκχυνόμενον, literally, "which is being poured out."

And Impetratory.

Theologians tell us that the *Fruit* of the Mass is threefold, (*a*) the *general* fruit which belongs to the whole Church; (*b*) the *special* fruit which the Priest may apply—subject, of course, to the good pleasure of God—as he will, saying Mass for this or that "intention"; (*c*) the *most special* fruit which accrues to the priest himself, according to his particular dispositions of soul, and which cannot be alienated.

The Threefold Fruit of the Mass.

We should never lose sight of the fact that the Sacrifice of the Eucharist is also a Sacred Banquet in which both priest and people partake of the Adorable Victim. Thus Tertullian expressly calls Holy Communion *participatio Sacrificii*.[1]

The Mass also a Divine Banquet.

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[1] *De Oratione*, cap. xiv.

"The sacrificial meal," writes the learned Bishop of Newport, "is the partaking of the Victim, and the participating in those gifts which the Sacrifice brings—that is, with Christians, the fruits of the Blessed Sacrament. It is no matter that at any particular Mass the Faithful who are present do not partake. The priest always communicates and, for the rest, the Mass is the one perpetual Sacrifice of the Christian Church, and it is always true, speaking of the Church throughout the world, that the Faithful are partaking of the Holy Communion."

The Council of Trent says: "This holy Synod would desire that in every Mass the Faithful who assist thereat should communicate, not only spiritually and in desire, but also sacramentally partaking, that so they might share more abundantly in the fruits of this most Holy Sacrifice." But the Council goes on to define that so-called "private" Masses, or Masses in which the priest alone communicates, are not only lawful, but commendable. And thereupon it adds the interesting note that "all such Masses are rightly considered to be really common"—that is, not private or individual devotions—"partly because the people spiritually communicate thereat, and partly because they are celebrated by the Church's public minister not for himself only but for all the Faithful who belong to the Body of Christ."[1] True Catholic feeling, therefore, never forgets that the Mass is not only a Sacrifice, but a supper or meal, or a common banquet of which it may be said that all the communicants of the whole world partake. The Body of Christ is brought down upon the altar by the Mass. Whether it is par-

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[1] Sess. xxii. cap. 6.

> taken of at the Mass or afterwards, that Communion is always the participation of the Sacrifice. The Body of Christ is the same Body on every altar. Whether the Faithful receive it at this particular Mass or do not receive it, Christ's servants ever throng to the one altar and the one table. It is only those who reject the Real Presence, who sever the Body of the Lord reserved [in the Tabernacle] from the Body of the Lord in the Eucharistic Liturgy. They speak of the Lord's Supper and make out that the common meal is all there is. Catholic Faith holds that it is the Sacrifice which gives its meaning and its efficacy to the common meal. Although the Church has always upheld that those who sacramentally receive at Mass partake far more abundantly of the fruits of the Mass; nevertheless, since the Body of the Lord, once consecrated in the Mass, remains real, and subsists as a sacramental embodiment of all that the Mass can effect (as far as it is His Will who there is really present) all who at any time communicate join in the Supper of the Lord. The Mass is the Lord's Supper; but it is a Supper which completes a Sacrifice."[1]

The Laity and the Mass.

In this Sacrifice, as in this Banquet, the laity have their share as well as ordained Priests. "Orate fratres," says the Priest at every Mass, "ut meum *et vestrum* Sacrificium." "Pray, my brethren, that my sacrifice *and yours* be acceptable to God." Moses of old was commanded by God to say to the children of Israel: "If you will hear My Voice and keep My Covenant, you shall be to Me a priestly kingdom."[1] These words are applied by the Holy Apostles Peter and John to the true Israel of God, the children of the Catholic Church.[2] The Jews had a special king and special priests, yet, in a true though metaphorical sense, all were priests and kings. The same is true of Catholics. So long as Catholics hear the Voice of their Lord and keep His Covenant, they all share most truly in His Kingdom and in His Priesthood. To Him all the Faithful offer "spiritual sacrifices"[3] and above all the Sacrifice of His Body and Blood, for their souls' health and refreshment, for the consolation of the dead and the comfort of the living—for the well-being of all whom they remember before His Holy Altar.

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[1] *The Holy Eucharist*, pp. 170, 171 (in *The Westminster Library*).

Quam magna multitudo dulcedinis Tuæ Domine, quam abscondisti timentibus Te. Proteges eos in Tabernaculo Tuo a contradictione linguarum. Viriliter agite et confortetur cor vestrum, omnes qui speratis in Domino.

"How great is the multitude of Thy sweetness, O Lord, which Thou hast hidden for them that fear Thee. In Thy Tabernacle shalt Thou hide them from the strife of tongues. Do manfully, and let your hearts be strengthened, all ye who hope in the Lord."

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[1] Exod. xix. 5, 6.

[2] I Pet. ii. 9; Apoc. v. 10.

[3] I Pet. ii. 5.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE SACRAMENTS OF ORDER AND MATRIMONY

THE Sacraments of Order and Matrimony differ from the other five Sacraments in the fact that they are intended not for every Christian, but for those only who are called to a special state of life. We all stand in need of new birth, and of strength for the spiritual warfare, and of forgiveness of our sins, and of the Bread that cometh down from Heaven—all Catholics hope one day to receive the grace of the Last Anointing. We are not all called upon either to become priests or to get married.

The two Social Sacraments.

It is far from being the case that those who receive the Sacrament of Holy Order or the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony receive thereby a gift that benefits none but themselves. On the contrary these two Sacraments are sometimes called social Sacraments, for the very reason that the grace which they convey is given to its recipient not only for his own spiritual well-being, but also that it should be used on behalf of the whole Christian Society. A priest is not set apart to offer Sacrifice for himself alone, but for the living and the dead. All the multiform activities of the Priesthood, other than the offering oi the Christian Sacrifice, are for the edification—that is, for the building up—of the Body of Christ. The office of baptizing, the hearing of Confessions, the administration of Holy Communion, the preaching of the Word of God, the spiritual care of the sick, the giving of counsel to those in stress of trial and difficulty, the consolation of the sorrowful and the afflicted, the instruction of children and of the ignorant, in a word the careful tending of the Flock of the Good Shepherd—all that a priest does in his capacity of priest—is for the welfare of the Christian commonwealth. Strip a land of priests—as Wales was stripped in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—and Catholicism must die out within its borders. Certain islands in the Outer Hebrides and a small corner of Japan are, as far as I know, the only exceptions to this general experience.

Similarly with regard to Marriage. Let the Sacrament of Matrimony be replaced by temporary unions between men and women, terminable at will; then, in the wreckage of Christian Morals, something else will suffer besides morality. The preservation of family life, with all its sanctities, depends upon the preservation of the Sacrament of Matrimony. Civilisation as we know it, indestructible so long, but only so long, as it remains based upon the family as its unit—is, should marriage disappear, itself doomed to destruction that can no longer be averted.

In the Law and Providence of God, the Sacrament of Matrimony is necessary for the continuance of Christian Society, just as the Sacrament of Order is necessary for the continuance of the Christian Church.

No less than the priest, the married man and the married woman have received a distinctive sacramental grace personal to themselves, but they too, like the priest, have to be careful not to live for themselves alone. The priest receives his Priesthood that he may henceforth devote his life in a special manner to the Church, whose special servant and minister he has become. In like manner, the married man knows that he is bound by a most sacred tie and obligation to consecrate his days to the wife whom God has given him, and to the children who may be his. Thus will he be of service not to himself alone, nor only to his family, but through them to the entire community.

We will consider these two Sacraments in the same chapter.

The Sacrament of Holy Order.

The Council of Trent teaches that: "In the New Testament there is a visible and external Priesthood, and the power of consecrating and offering the true Body and Blood of the Lord and of remitting and retaining sins; and not an office only and bare ministry of preaching the Gospel—so that [in opposition to the novel Protestant doctrine current at the time] those who do not preach may still be priests."[1]

We are also taught by the same authority that "In the Catholic Church there is a Hierarchy (or sacred body of rulers) instituted by the ordination of God, which consists of Bishops, Priests and Ministers."[2] The word Ministers here denotes "the other Orders, greater and less, by which, as by so many steps, the priesthood is approached."[3]

St. Clement of Rome and the Sacred Hierarchy.

To this Sacred Ministry of Bishops, Priests and Ministers in the New Law, St. Clement of Rome refers the High Priest, Priests and Levites of the Old Law as typical;[4] in the immediate context he uses—for the first time in Christian literature—the word *layman* (*λαϊκος*), regarding as the type of the Christian layman the Israelite who did not belong to the tribe of Levi and to the priestly family. We thus find that Christian worship was, in Apostolic times, in the hands of a hierarchy distinct from the people. "Let each one of us," continues St. Clement, "keep to his own order, not transgressing the fixed rule of his office."[5]

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[1] Sess. xxiii., Can. 1; *cf.* 1 Tim. v. 17.

[2] Sess. xxiii., Can. 6.

[3] Sess. xxiii., Can. 2.

[4] xl. 2-5: *Τῷ γὰρ ἀρχιερεῖ ἴδιαι λειτουργίαι δεδομέναι εἰσίν, καὶ τοῖς ἱερεῦσιν ἴδιος ὁ τόπος προστέτακται, καὶ λευίταις ἴδιαι διακονίαι ἐπικείνται.* It should be stated that some authorities here regard the *ἀρχιερεύς* as typifying, not the Bishop, but Christ.

[5] *Ibid.*, xli. 1.

The "Ministers" mentioned in the Canon of the Council of Trent which we have just quoted include Deacons, Subdeacons, and the holders of the four Minor Orders. Though the Subdiaconate and the Minor Orders have come down to us from very early times, it is now commonly held by Catholic Theologians that they are of ecclesiastical not of divine appointment. Consequently their reception does not involve the reception of a Sacrament.

Seven Orders.

The Diaconate, on the contrary, is held to have been instituted by the Apostles on divine authority.

But One Sacrament of Order.

It is certain that there is only *one* Sacrament of Holy Order—otherwise there would be more than Seven Sacraments, which we know from Tradition and the express teaching of the Council of Trent, not to be the case. Yet the one Sacrament of Order is received three times by those who are ordained successively deacon, priest and Bishop. And since it is now very unusual to receive the Diaconate only, this Sacrament is commonly received twice.

The Diaconate.

According to the present discipline of the Church, the chief function of a deacon is to minister at the Altar. He is also allowed, with the permission of the Bishop, to baptize, to preach and to distribute Holy Communion.

The Priesthood.

A priest, in special virtue of his priesthood, receives power over the Real Body of Christ in the Eucharist, and over the Mystical Body of Christ in Absolution.

The specific difference between the Order of priest and that of Bishop is that the latter is alone empowered to ordain. The Episcopate itself contains the fulness of the Sacrament of Order, and from this point of view all Bishops are equal and there is nothing higher in the Church. The authority of the Bishop of Rome over the Bishop of the smallest See in Christendom—and over all other Bishops—comes to him in consequence of his unique position as Successor of St. Peter in the Apostolic See. The Bishop of Rome possesses nothing accruing to him from the Sacrament of Order that does not belong (to take St. Jerome's example) to the Bishop of Eugubium. Regarded simply *as Bishops* the Bishop of Eugubium and the Bishop of Rome are on an equality.[1]

The Episcopate.

On the Day of Pentecost the whole Christian Ministry was comprised in the persons of the Apostles. To the number of the Eleven were aggregated first Matthias, then Paul and Barnabas.

It soon became clear that the Apostles stood in need of coadjutors—an imperative need which was supplied without delay. The New Testament gives us an account of the early institution of the Diaconate, but is silent as to the first ordination by any Apostle of either priest or Bishop.

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[1] *Cf.* S. Hier., *Ep.* cxlvi.

πρεσβύτεροι and ἐπίσκοποι.

We find, however, several Scriptural references—the earliest of which are incidental—to a class of men separated from their fellow-Christians by their office and authority in the Church who are called sometimes πρεσβύτεροι, and sometimes ἐπίσκοποι. The Protestant versions of the Bible translate πρεσβύτερος *Elder*, a translation which is etymologically correct ; the Catholic versions, relying on an unbroken tradition, generally translate the same word *Priest*. Both Catholic and Protestant versions translate ἐπίσκοπος (literally " overlooker ") *Bishop*. Therefore, at first sight, we have in the English Bible warrant for the Threefold Ministry from the beginning.

However, on examination we find that things are not so simple as they may appear, for it is as certain as anything of the kind can be that throughout the New Testament the words πρεσβύτερος and ἐπίσκοπος refer to the same office and are used as convertible terms.[1] On the other hand it is equally certain that from the time of St. Ignatius onwards (we can hardly remind the reader too often that St. Ignatius had known St. John) the word *ἐπίσκοπος* was stereotyped and restricted in meaning to its present sense, and was used exclusively for the first Order in the Ministry. Thus St. Ignatius writes that "Men should respect the *ἐπίσκοπος* as being the type of the Father and the *πρεσβύτεροι* as the Council of God."[1]

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[1] For example we read (Acts xx. 17) that during his third missionary journey St. Paul sent from Miletus for the πρεσβύτεροι of the Church at Ephesus that he might exhort them, but in the exhortation itself he calls them ἐπίσκοποι (Acts xx. 28). Again St. Paul, writing to Titus, after saying that the πρεσβύτεροι must be blameless, proceeds "*for* the ἐπίσκοπος must be blameless as God's Steward" (Titus i. 5-7).

At once the question arises as to what led to the differentiation between these two words *πρεσβύτερος* and *ἐπίσκοπος*, and how it came to pass that, though there was so short a lapse of time between St. Luke and St. Paul on the one hand and St. Ignatius on the other, while St. Luke and St. Paul use them as synonyms, St. Ignatius, on the contrary (with all the Church that was to come after him), uses them in sharply defined, even in contrasted senses?

To this question it is impossible to answer with absolute certainty.

Two solutions have been advanced.

According to the first (1) the *office* of Episcopacy was restricted—according to the second (2) the *word* Bishop (or rather the word *ἐπίσκοπος*) changed in its meaning—in the sub-Apostolic period.

(1) It has been widely held that the clergy who in the New Testament are called *πρεσβύτεροι* and *ἐπίσκοποι* indifferently, were all Bishops, that at

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[1] *Tral.*, iii. 1. *Cf. Ad Rom.* ii. 2; St. Irenæus *Ad Hær.* iii. 3, 4; Eus. *H.E.* iv. 23, 3, etc.

the very beginning the Church was governed in each place by a College of Bishops, but that before the end of the first century what is called "the monarchical episcopate" as we have it now, was substituted for this arrangement, having as its consequence that only one priest in each Diocese was consecrated Bishop. For this view such great names as Batiffol amongst Catholics and Lightfoot amongst Anglicans may be quoted. Batiffol writes that the Diotrephes whom St. John tells us was "fond of pre-eminence" (ὁ φιλοπρωτεύων αὐτῶν)[1] was the first monarchical Bishop (other than an Apostle) whose name has come down to us."[2]

(2) It seems to me, however, almost certain that the exact opposite of this view represents the real facts, and that far from all the πρεσβύτεροι and ἐπίσκοποι of whom we read in the Acts and Epistles being Bishops, none of them were such, excepting the Apostles and their Delegates,[3] and that the word ἐπίσκοπος, so soon to denote a Bishop, was at first used ordinarily[4] for a simple priest.[5]

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[1] 3 John 9.

[2] *Primitive Catholicism*, p. 122.

[3] *Cf.* 1 Tim. i. 3 ; Titus i. 5.

[4] I have written "ordinarily" because St. Peter refers the word ἐπισκοπή (Acts i. 20) to the Apostolate of Judas, and in his First Epistle (ii. 25) calls our Lord the Shepherd and ἐπίσκοπος of our souls.

[5] This is taken for granted by Fr. Keogh, S.J., in his learned Appendix on *The Ministry in the Apostolic Church* to the

For, we find St. Paul mentioning the "ἐπίσκοποι and deacons"[1] at Philippi, whilst St. Polycarp, the pupil of St. John, writing also to the Church at Philippi, speaks of their πρεσβύτεροι and deacons.[2] Is it not almost certain that by ἐπίσκοποι St. Paul meant what St. Polycarp certainly meant by πρεσβύτεροι—Priests, not Bishops? If St. Paul saluted the *Bishops* and Deacons of Philippi, it requires an elaborate theory, which is after all an unproved hypothesis at best, to account for the absence of priests who were not Bishops in that Church; if, on the other hand, he saluted the *priests* and deacons, no difficulty remains, since a Bishop had very probably not yet been appointed at Philippi, the Church remaining under the direct supervision of the Apostles.[3]

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translation of the First Epistle to the Corinthians in the New Westminster Version of the Sacred Scriptures. Fr. Keogh writes: "The word ἐπίσκοπος was at first used for all who had oversight; by the beginning of the second century, in Asia at least, it was restricted to him who had supreme oversight." Of the other view he goes so far as to say that it "is clearly against the evidence."

[1] Philip. i. 1.

[2] *Ad Philip.* 5, 6, 11. St. Clement of Rome, writing before St. Polycarp, adheres to the Pauline terminology when he reminds the Corinthians that "the Apostles preaching everywhere in country and town, appointed their firstfruits, when they had proved them by the Spirit, to be ἐπίσκοποι and deacons."

[3] The establishment of the Diocesan Episcopate was no doubt a work of gradual growth. Thus St. Jerome tells us

A similar deduction may be drawn from the fact that St. Paul, writing to Timothy, enlarges first on the qualities required of ἐπίσκοποι, and then at once on those required by deacons.[1] If the word ἐπίσκοπος here means (as ordinarily translated) Bishop, we are immediately struck by the omission of any reference to priests; but if it denotes priests, all difficulty disappears, since Timothy is evidently—and indeed must be on any hypothesis adopted by Catholics—the Bishop. No doubt Timothy and Titus may be rightly called Apostolic Delegates, but they were also Bishops.

Timothy and Titus Apostolic Delegates and Bishops.

Not only is it the case that the Apostle writes to them in a strain which the Pope (who possesses the Apostolic Office in its fulness), and the Pope alone, might rightly use to Bishops at the present time, but also he addresses them as none but Bishops can properly be addressed. Their duties correspond to the Episcopal government of a Diocese; they are urged to have a Bishop's care for the spiritual welfare of all, priests, deacons and simple faithful; they are reminded of that sedulous guarding of the purity of the Deposit of the Faith which is peculiarly a Bishop's duty; above all, they are exhorted "to lay

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(*Contra Hær.* iii. 4) that it was established at Smyrna by the Apostles, and Tertullian (*Adv. Marc.* iv. 5) that it was founded by St. John throughout Asia Minor.

[1] 1 Tim. iii. 1-12.

hands lightly on no man"—that is, only after conscientious and deliberate enquiry to exercise the office of ordaining priests, which, as we have seen, is a Bishop's unique privilege. There is no suggestion in the New Testament that any *πρεσβύτερος* had the right to ordain, excepting the Apostles themselves and Timothy and Titus, who most certainly were Bishops. The one difficulty in the way of holding that the only Bishops of the New Testament are the Apostles and their Delegates consists in the fact that the word *ἐπίσκοπος* was so soon afterwards restricted to the First Order in the Ministry. But since Timothy and Titus are given no *title* in the New Testament (though St. Paul calls them his sons, and says that he has "set" them in Ephesus and Crete), it soon became necessary to find a word other than Apostle to denote a Bishop's office.[1] When this necessity was felt, it was convenient and indeed almost obvious to restrict the meaning of *ἐπίσκοπος*. And this is exactly what Theodore of Mopsuestia, writing in the fourth century, tells us took place. Nor on a subject of this kind is there any reason to reject Theodore's testimony.

Something very similar, though in the opposite direction, happened with regard to the Christian use of the word *Sacerdos*. African writers of the third, fourth, and fifth centuries (such as St. Cyprian, St. Optatus, and St. Augustine) by *sacerdos* ordinarily mean a Bishop—a priest they called by the old name of presbyter; but by *sacerdos* we now mean ordinarily not Bishop but priest (though of course every Bishop remains a priest), so that the words *Presbyter* and *Sacerdos* are now used as synonyms.[1]

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[1] It is quite possible that the word *ἄγγελος* was the first word used in the New Testament (Apoc. ii. and iii.) to designate a Bishop who was not an Apostle.

Essential distinction between the Episcopate and Priesthood.

Whatever view we may take as to the meaning of the word ἐπίσκοπος in the New Testament, it remains certain that from the earliest ages of the Church there was a real distinction between the office of Priest and Bishop. This is clear from the instructions given by St. Paul to Timothy and Titus, and also (as is now generally conceded) by the consentient witness of all antiquity.

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[1] It may at first seem somewhat strange that the word ἱερεύς (*sacerdos*) is never applied in the New Testament (excepting in the Epistle to the Hebrews—and by implication only) to the Christian priest. The reason of this becomes evident when we remember that the word was used freely of the Pagan and Jewish priest, from whom the Christian priest had to be so carefully distinguished. To employ it too soon of a Christian priest would have led to inevitable confusion and misunderstanding. For this reason, no doubt, the Epistle to the Hebrews is the only book in the New Testament where even our Lord is called ἱερεύς (or ἀρχιερεύς), and here His Priesthood—according to the order of Melchisedech—is carefully distinguished from that of the Jews. It was therefore safe to use the word in this connexion.

The Matter of the Sacrament of Order.

(*a*) The essential *Matter* of the Sacrament of Order consists in the imposition of hands.

Its Form.

(*b*) The *Form* consists in the words used in moral conjunction with the Matter. The Decree of Pope Leo XIII. on the invalidity of Anglican Orders explains that these words must "either specify or denote" the Order to be conferred. This condition is verified in every ancient Ordinal;[1] it was not, however, fulfilled in the Anglican Book of Common Prayer put forth by authority of Parliament in 1549, and in exclusive use in the Church of England until 1662.

Its Minister.

(*c*) The *Minister* is a Bishop. St. Paul writes to Timothy and Titus that they are to ordain others,[2] and urges Timothy "to stir up the grace that is in thee, by means of (*διά*) the laying on of my hands."[3] He has already reminded him in a previous Epistle that this gift was (as at the present day) "accompanied by (*μετά*) the laying on of the hands of the Priesthood."[4] We see that the Sacrament of Order is conferred by an Apostle, or Apostolic Delegate (*i.e.*, a Bishop), priests assisting in the ceremony (as has always been the custom of the Church) by the laying on of hands.

Its Subject.

(*d*) The *Subject* of the Sacrament of Order is a baptized male.

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[1] *The Popes and the Ordinal*, by Mgr. Banes.

[2] 1 Tim. v. 22; Titus i. 5. [3] 2 Tim. i. 6. [4] 1 Tim. iv. 14.

The Sacrament of Matrimony.

With regard to the Sacrament of Matrimony, limits of space permit me hardly to do more than state certain important principles, accepted by all Catholics.

(1) Marriage is the lawful union between one man and one woman.

(2) It is effected by a contract.

(3) Christ raised matrimony to the dignity of a Sacrament.

(4) Amongst Christians there can be no true marriage, which is not also a Sacrament.[1]

(5) Like other Sacraments, this Sacrament can be received only by the baptized.

(6) Completed Christian marriage can be dissolved only by the death of one of the contracting parties.

(7) The *Ministers* of the Sacrament are the contracting parties themselves.

(8) The *Subject* of the Sacrament is any baptized person, who is free to contract.

Its Matter and Form.

There is no certainty concerning the *Matter* and *Form* of the Sacrament. Most probably, however, both Matter and Form consist in the Contract itself—the Matter, inasmuch as it signifies by words or signs the mutual offering of one another by each contracting party in marriage; the Form, inasmuch as it signifies the acceptance of the gift.

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[1] *Cf.* Allocution of Pius IX., September 27, 1852.

The chief objections against the Catholic view of marriage are levelled against the doctrine:

Objections against the Catholic doctrine on the Sacrament of Matrimony.

(1) That marriage is a Sacrament.

(2) That the Church has power to make null and void matrimonial contracts between Christians, which otherwise would be valid marriages, by the creation of what are called Diriment Impediments.

(3) That marriage can be dissolved only by death.

With a few observations on each of these subjects I will conclude this chapter.

Marriage a Sacrament.

(1) Calvin and Luther, following in the steps of the Waldenses in the thirteenth century, denied with vehemence that Marriage is a Sacrament.

For example, Calvin wrote:

"Lastly, there is Matrimony, which all admit was instituted by God, though no one before the time of Gregory regarded it as a Sacrament. What man in his sober senses *could* so regard it? God's ordinance is good and holy; so also agriculture, architecture, shoemaking, haircutting are legitimate ordinances of God, but they are not Sacraments."[1]

And Luther:

"Marriage is no divinely instituted Sacrament, but the invention of men in the Church, arising from ignorance of the subject."[2]

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[1] *Institutiones* IV. xix. 34.

[2] *De Captivitate Babylonicà.*

In condemnation of this heresy the Council of Trent defined as follows:

"If anyone shall say that Matrimony is not truly and properly one of the Seven Sacraments of the Evangelical Law, instituted by Christ our Lord, but that it was invented in the Church by men, and does not confer grace, let him be anathema."[1]

Pope Innocent IV. in the Profession of Faith prescribed for the Waldenses had included Matrimony amongst the Sacraments of the New Law.[2] In this he was but formulating the constant Tradition of the Church.

St. Augustine and the Sacrament of Matrimony.

St. Augustine represented this Tradition when he compared Marriage in its nature with Holy Order and Baptism, which he certainly regarded as Sacraments in the strict sense of the word:

"Amongst all people and all men, the good that is secured by marriage consists in the offspring and in the chastity of married fidelity [here he is referring to *Natural* Marriage], but in the case of God's people [Christians—here the reference is to *Sacramental* Marriage] it consists moreover in the holiness of the Sacrament, by reason of which it is forbidden, even after a separation may have taken place, to marry another as long as the first partner lives . . . just as priests are ordained to draw together a Christian community, and even though no such community may be formed, the Sacrament of Order still abides in those ordained, or just as the Lord's Sacrament, after it has been conferred, abides even in one who has been dismissed from his office on account of sin."[1]

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[1] Sess. xxiv., Can. 1.

[2] Denziger-Bannwart, *Enchiridion*, N. 424.

And in another work:

"Undoubtedly it belongs to the essence of this Sacrament that when man and wife are once united by marriage, this bond remains indissoluble throughout their lives. As long as both live, there remains a something attached to the marriage, which neither mutual separation, nor union with a third can remove. In such cases it remains for the aggravation of their guilt, instead of for the strengthening of their union. Just as the soul of an apostate, which was once similarly wedded unto Christ and now separates itself from Him, does not, in spite of its loss of faith, lose the Sacrament of Faith, *which it received in the waters of regeneration.*"[2]

The Council of Trent tells us that the sacramental grace conferred in marriage is "intimated" by the Apostle in the Epistle to the Ephesians:[3]

St. Paul and the Sacrament of Matrimony.

"Let women be subject to their husbands, as to the Lord, because the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ is the

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[1] *De Bono Conjugali*, cap. xxiv.

[2] *De Nuptiis et Concupiscentia*, i. x.

[3] Sess. xxiv.: "Quod Paulus Apostolus *innuit*."

Head of the Church. He is the Saviour of His Body. Therefore, as the Church is subject to Christ, so also let wives be subject to their husbands in all things. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved the Church, and delivered Himself up for it . . . so also ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife, loveth himself. For no man ever hated his own flesh, but nourisheth it and cherisheth it, as also Christ doth the Church, because we are members of His Body, of His Flesh and of His Bones."

After this exhortation St. Paul alludes at once to the divine institution of marriage in the prophetic words proclaimed by God through Adam: "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh. This is a great Sacrament, but I refer it to Christ and the Church." [1]

It would of course be a gross mistake to insist on the word *Sacrament*, which here merely means *Mystery*.[2] The point urged by the Council of Trent is not a verbal one, but regards the argument as a whole. The mystery of Christian marriage is referred by the Apostle to "Christ and the Church."

"No one," writes Fr. Rickely,[3] "will be simple enough to maintain that matrimony must be a

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[1] Eph. v. 31, 32.

[2] *Cf.* p. 377, n.

[3] *Further Notes on St. Paul,* p. 48.

Sacrament on the mere ground that in the Vulgate it is called *sacramentum*. Nevertheless the *mystery* or *sacramentum* spoken of, is the Mystery, or Sacrament of Marriage, not directly the Mystery of the Incarnation. The Mystery involved in the marriage contract of husband and wife is great, inasmuch as, like other Mysteries, it is representative of something; and what it represents is that greatest of the works of God, the union of God with man in the Incarnation. . . ."

The first marriage between Adam and Eve in Paradise was a symbol of the union between Christ and the Church. But Christian marriage is something far greater than any type. It is a subsequent representation. "But," writes Father Lehmkuhl, "elsewhere[1] St. Paul emphasises in a most significant fashion the difference between the Old and the New Testament, when he calls the religious rites of the former 'weak and needy elements' which could not of themselves confer true sanctity, the effect of true justice and sanctity being reserved for the New Testament and its religious rites. If, therefore, he terms Christian marriage, as a religious act, 'a great Sacrament,' he means not to reduce it to the low plane of the Old Testament rites, to the plane of a 'weak and needy element,' but rather to show its importance as a sign of the life of grace, and, like the other

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[1] Gal. iv. 9.

Sacraments, an efficacious sign. St. Paul, then, does not speak of marriage as a true Sacrament explicitly, but only in such wise that the doctrine must be deduced from his words."[1] He "intimates" it.

The Teaching of the Church.

Whatever may be thought of the force of this argument from the language of St. Paul, Catholics know that Marriage is one of the Sacraments of the Gospel, from the Teaching of the Church, which in this matter has never been challenged in the East, and only in modern times in the West, of Christendom. The Sacrament of Matrimony shows forth the mysterious union between Christ and the Church, of which the union between our First Parents was a type. Moreover it gives "the grace which it signifies," enabling a Christian man to love and cherish and be true to his wife as Christ our Lord loves and cherishes and is true to His Bride the Church; strengthening a Christian woman to love and obey and serve and be faithful to her husband, as the Holy Church loves and obeys and serves and is ever faithful to her Sovereign Lord and heavenly Spouse.

Marriage a Contract.

(2) Marriage, like every other contract, requires to be clothed with certain conditions for its lawfulness and validity. Thus, in order to secure civil effects the State requires that it should be

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[2] *Cf.* Article on "Marriage, Sacrament of," in the *Catholic Encyclopædia*, by Fr. Lehmkuhl, S.J.

celebrated in certain buildings and with certain formalities. In like manner the Church has the right to make conditions, the fulfilment of which is necessary for the validity of the matrimonial contract amongst Christians. This right concerns the spiritual order only, and flows from the fact that the Church is the guardian of the Seven Sacraments, of which Matrimony is one.

The Impediment of Clandestinity.

The Ecclesiastical Impediment, rendering certain marriages not only unlawful but also invalid, known as that of *Clandestinity*, requires a few words of explanation, since its introduction into these countries by the *Ne Temere* Decree has been widely misunderstood. The Catholic Church holds that, apart from special legislation, any baptised man and woman who are free to contract marriage can do so in any place, merely by signification of their assent to the matrimonial contract, without the intervention or presence of any third party. From very early times Catholics were commanded to obtain the Blessing of the priest in a religious ceremony—the omission of such a blessing rendering the marriage sinful but not invalid. However, in the sixteenth century it was recognised that very great troubles and even lifelong unhappiness too often arose from these clandestine marriages, as they were called. Perhaps a boy and girl contracted marriage secretly without the knowledge of their parents, and much misery ensued in consequence to all concerned, but the union was absolutely indissoluble. The Church had no power to break the bond. This difficulty was partly met by the institution at the Council of Trent of the Impediment of *Clandestinity*, whereby it was required that in future Christian marriage should, as a condition of its validity, be celebrated in the presence of a priest and two witnesses.

In the circumstances of the times it was impossible to enforce this requirement in Protestant countries; it was therefore declared not to be operative in those kingdoms where the Decrees of the Council of Trent had not been promulgated. For example, in England, during the reign of Elizabeth it would in most cases have been simply impossible to procure the presence of a priest at the marriage of Catholics. A price was upon the head of every priest in the land. But happier days having long since dawned — days of religious liberty — the late Pope Pius the Tenth by the Decree beginning *Ne Temere* extended the legislation of the Council of Trent on this subject, *so far as Catholics are concerned*, to the whole world.[1] There seemed to be no longer any reason for exempting Catholics dwelling in the British Empire from the ordinary Marriage Law of the Church. In the case of unhappy marriages most

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[1] The application of the *Ne Temere* Decree was subsequently withdrawn from the German Empire.

Protestants believe that in the last resort they may fly to the remedy of divorce. Catholics have no such remedy available in the case of matrimonial misery. It behoves, therefore, the supreme Ecclesiastical authority to take every precaution that a sacramental contract, which is of its very essence indissoluble, should be made with the blessing of religion and after at least some due consideration.

The Indissolubility of Marriage.

(3) This indissolubility of Christian marriage is often brought as a grievance against the Church by those who do not belong to her Unity. Men often say that the Catholic Church is "cruel" in refusing the relief of dissolution of marriage to those who have been unhappily married. Nothing can be easier than to produce hard cases. Perhaps a young man is deserted by his wife, and left with little children on his hands. It is asked: "Is he, in case his wicked wife survives him, to spend the rest of his days without a partner? Is he to be doomed to loneliness? Are his children never to know a mother's care?" The Catholic Church can only answer that it is never under any circumstances lawful to do evil that good may come, that she cannot go beyond her powers, and that no power has been given her to break the bond which God has made, or to loose those whom God's Hand has joined. If the man or the woman who has suffered through the desertion of wife or husband

will trust God, special and extraordinary grace will be given (as experience proves) in every case to bear the extraordinary cross.

It is a law of general application that individuals have constantly to suffer in this world (in this manner—if the suffering be generously accepted—sanctifying their own souls) for the common good. But the common good—the good of the Christian community—emphatically requires that under no circumstances should Christian Marriage be capable of dissolution, or a Christian man be allowed to have two wives, or a Christian woman two husbands, at the same time.

For, as we have already observed, Christian Society depends upon the Christian Family, and the Christian Family depends upon the Unity and indissolubility of Marriage. We have only to contrast the condition of women and children—indeed of society generally—in countries where polygamy is allowed, and the position of the wife is precarious, with that existing where monogamy is still the rule, to be assured of this. Of all the blessings that Christ bestowed upon mankind, none is greater than His elevation of marriage to the dignity of a Sacrament, whereby grace is given to men and women enabling them to imitate the Holy Family of Nazareth—husband loving wife as Joseph loved Mary, wife loving husband as Mary loved Joseph, husband and wife loving their children as Joseph and Mary loved Jesus, their Child.

CHAPTER XXV

THE SACRAMENT OF EXTREME UNCTION

SUDDEN death—even violent death—may come to any one of us at any moment. Nor should this possibility be unduly dreaded. Such an ending is sometimes a special grace. No death is really lonely for which due preparation has been made during life, for there God is present—His Hands full of gracious benedictions—and His Holy Angels.

For the overwhelming majority of mankind, however, death comes as the direct consequence of serious illness ; yet, as we all know, there are many serious illnesses which do not terminate fatally. Serious illness is, then, something with which we have to reckon—serious illness, often so full of depression, anxiety, danger. And in our reckoning it is an abiding comfort to remember that, when life is in jeopardy—perhaps is ebbing fast away—the Catholic Religion, which has never failed us yet during the progress of life's story, then will fail us least of all. For that moment of supreme need the Church of God possesses celestial consolations, prominent amongst which is the Sacrament of Extreme Unction.

"Is any man sick amongst you?" writes St. James, "let him bring in the priests of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the Name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick man, and the Lord shall raise him up, and if he be in sins they shall be forgiven him."[1]

In these words we find the Apostolic promulgation of a Sacrament which had already during the lifetime of our Lord been foreshadowed by the action of the Apostles, of whom we read: "They anointed with oil many that were sick and healed them."[2]

The Reformers and the Sacrament of Extreme Unction.

It will create no surprise to learn that Calvin and Luther denied the sacramental nature of Extreme Unction. Calvin described it as a piece of "histrionic hypocrisy"[3] and Luther classed it amongst rites that are of human or ecclesiastical institution.[4] The late Dr. Forbes, Anglican Bishop of Brechin, on the contrary, wrote as follows in his well-known commentary on the Thirty-nine Articles:

"The Unction of the sick is the lost Pleiad of the Anglican firmament. . . . There has been practically lost an Apostolic practice, whereby, in case of grievous sickness, the faithful were anointed and prayed over, for the forgiveness of their sins, and to restore them, if God so willed, or to give them spiritual support in their maladies."[1]

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[1] Jas. v. 14, 15.

[2] Mark vi. 12, 13.

[3] *Instit.* IV. xix. 18.

[4] *De Captiv. Babylonic., cap. de Extrema Unctione.*

Extreme Unction a Sacrament of the Gospel.

An "Apostolic practice" which is also an external rite, to which is ascribed "the forgiveness of sins" and the bestowal of "spiritual support" is plainly a Sacrament of the Gospel, since no ceremonial anointing could produce such effects, unless it had been instituted by the Divine Founder of Christianity for this very purpose. Now, all these effects are expressly attributed by the Apostle to the anointing of the sick which he enjoins in case of serious illness.

"Anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick man, and the Lord shall raise him up, and if he be in sins they shall be forgiven him."

It is clear that the words "shall save" and "shall raise him up" are to be referred primarily to spiritual rather than to bodily blessings, for they are coupled with the forgiveness of sins and are universal and absolute in their nature. But experience proves now—and no doubt proved in Apostolic days—that everyone who is anointed in serious illness is not "saved" from that illness and "raised up" to renewed health, whilst Faith teaches us that every Christian who receives this Sacrament with due dispositions—that is, with sorrow for sin in the soul—will receive salvation from the Lord and be raised up by Him spiritually, receiving also such benefit for his body as God sees to be for his welfare.

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[1] Forbes *On the Articles*, vol. ii., p. 463.

We may find an analogy in the promises given to prayer. The promise is given us that whatever we ask believing we shall receive, and we are taught by our religion that this promise will be fulfilled without exception or limitation where spiritual blessings are concerned, but that temporal goods will be given to us only so far as they may conduce to our lasting good.

Matter of the Sacrament of Extreme Unction.

(1) The *Matter* of this Sacrament is consecrated oil. No one has ever doubted that the oil mentioned by St. James is oil of olives. In the West pure oil without mixture of any other substance seems to have been always used. In the East the custom was early introduced of adding, in some places, a little water as a symbol of Baptism, in others a little wine in memory of the Good Samaritan, and amongst the Nestorians some ashes or dust from the sepulchre of a Saint. In all ages the oil has been blessed or consecrated before use—in the West, by the Bishop on Maundy Thursday, in the East, even amongst Catholics, by the officiating priests before the administration of the Sacrament.

(2) The *Form* consists of words indicating the grace conferred. At present both in East and

West the form is precatory (the "prayer of faith" of the Apostle). Some of the ancient Rituals, however, contain Forms which are absolute. For example the Form of the Ancient Celtic Church was: "I anoint thee with sanctified oil in the Name of the Trinity that thou mayest be saved for ever and ever."[1] Other Forms of great antiquity are partly precatory and partly absolute. Our present form consists of the prayer "Through this holy Unction and His Own most tender Mercy may the Lord pardon thee whatever sins thou hast committed by sight" (at the anointing of the eyes), "by hearing" (at the anointing of the ears), similarly mentioning the other members of the body, whenever time permits of anointing the five senses and the feet; and, where there is imminent danger of death, of one prayer accompanying one unction (for example, on the forehead): "Through this holy Unction may the Lord pardon thee whatever sins thou hast committed."

Its Form.

(3) The *Minister* is a priest. In ancient times where it was easily practicable, the Sacrament was administered by several priests. This custom is at present observed throughout the East. But this was never, at any time, or in any place, held to be necessary. It is true that St. James writes: "Let him bring in the priests," but this is an expression similar in its nature to "let

Its Minister.

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[1] Warren, *Liturgy and Ritual of the Celtic Church*, p. 168.

him bring in the doctors," where as everyone will see, it might easily be meant merely "Let him send for the nearest medical man."

Its Subject. (4) The *Subject* is a Christian, who has had the use of reason, and is in danger of death from sickness.

He must be *a Christian*, for we know that no one who has not been baptized can receive any other Sacrament. St. James writes: "Is any man *amongst you* sick."

He must have had *the use of reason*, for this Sacrament was instituted primarily for the forgiveness of sins; and without the use of reason there can be no sin.

The danger of death must arise from *sickness*, as we gather from the words of St. James. Consequently, no one going into action, no one in danger of death during a battle, but still unwounded, no criminal going to death on the scaffold, no martyr going to death for the Faith is a subject for this Sacrament.

Its Effects. (5) The *Effects* are described by the Council of Trent in the following words:

"The effect [of Extreme Unction] is the grace of the Holy Ghost whose unction blots out sins (if any remain to be expiated), and the consequences of sin, and alleviates and strengthens the soul of the sick person, by exciting in him a great confidence in the Divine Mercy, a confidence sustained by which he bears more lightly the troubles and sufferings of disease, and more easily resists the temptations of the demon lying in wait for his heel, and sometimes, when it is expedient for his soul's salvation, recovers bodily health."[1]

The Sacrament of Extreme Unction and the Sacrament of Penance.

Unction has always been associated in its administration with the Sacrament of Penance. Since the former of these sacraments is a Sacrament of the living, there is always an obligation in the case of a sick man, who is conscious of mortal sin, to go to Confession, where this is possible, before he is anointed. However, even mortal sin is directly forgiven by Extreme Unction, if the sinner for any reason has without fault of his own not received Absolution. "If he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him."

The Special Effect of the Sacrament of Extreme Unction.

The special effect of this Sacrament is the removal of the consequences of sin (called by the Council of Trent *reliquiæ*) and the infusion of peace and strength into the soul, enabling it to fight its battle against the powers of evil with great tranquillity and much confidence in God.

It would seem probable that where bodily health is restored as a result of the reception of Extreme Unction, this is not strictly speaking miraculous, but is the supernatural result—flowing from the mysterious union of soul and body—which is the direct consequence of the grace of this Mystery of Christ's Kindness. It is therefore most important to receive Extreme Unction early in an illness; indeed as soon as the illness becomes grave and there is danger of death. Only thus may we be sure that the Sacrament has freedom to operate normally—that is, in accordance with the laws which God has seen fit to establish—not only for the health of the soul, but also for that of the body.

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[1] Sess. xiv., cap. 2, *de Ext. Unctione.*

No priest and no physician who has had much experience of illness amongst Catholics will doubt that in many cases bodily health is often restored after the Last Anointing, however we may account for the fact.

A Personal Experience.

Some fifteen years ago I was giving a Mission in a mining village in Yorkshire. One day the doctor of the place came to dinner with my host —the parish priest. After the meal was over, we fell into conversation about matters of religion. The doctor said that if we priests would not take offence, he would like to be frank and tell us that unfortunately he believed in "nothing."

"Well, then," said the parish priest, "I will guarantee that, if you will do one single thing that I will ask you, at the end of five years you will anyway believe in *something*."

"What is that," asked our friend, "and what is it that I am to do?"

"When you go to any of my people," replied the priest, "I want you to let me know in good time if they are seriously ill. I shall go and see them at once, and shall anoint them, saying some Latin prayers. I want you also to make a note in your note-book of the condition of each patient before he is anointed, and also of his condition a few days after the anointing. If you do this, I will guarantee that in a considerable number of cases there will be a marked improvement of a nature that medical science cannot account for, and beyond your power of explanation. You will, then, at least believe that this is due to the anointing of which I have just spoken."

The doctor promised to do as he was requested.

Some years afterwards I went back to the same place and found the same parish priest who had been there at the time of my previous visit. I remembered the doctor, and asked whether he still "believed in nothing." "No," replied my friend, "he came to me long before the five years I gave him were past—very soon in fact after he had begun to note the results of Extreme Unction, and told me that he fully admitted that here he had found something beyond the power of nature. Further—he added that since Anointing the sick had visible supernatural effects, Baptism also might have invisible results. He is now very careful to baptize children in danger of death. Indeed, he asked me to teach him how to do so. I think that before he dies himself, the children whom he has baptized, and who have through his agency gone to Heaven, will obtain him the grace of complete faith in *all* that God has revealed."

I have since heard that a distinguished Edinburgh Professor of medicine, not a Catholic, was for many years accustomed to urge the medical students whom he addresses to be careful when they come to practise, always to call in the priest early to Catholic patients, adding these words: " For, gentlemen, explain it as we may, there is certainly something that these priests do which is good for the bodily health of those whom they attend in sickness. It is our duty to see that those whom we attend professionally have every chance that we can give them of recovery. Our business is not with theories but with facts."

Neither do Catholics trouble themselves overmuch with mere theories. All men who investigate are acquainted with the fact that, in the Providence and by the Disposition of God, the Sacrament of Extreme Unction bestows wonderful peace and calm upon the soul, and oftentimes also restoration of health to the body.

" The prayer of faith shall save the sick man and the Lord shall raise him up."

CHAPTER XXVI

THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS

The corporate and the individual side of religion.

Our religion has two sides—the corporate and the personal—every man's religion is his own personal affair, and consists essentially of his direct relations with God, and yet he reaches God, and God reaches him, often and intimately through the Body of the Church, which is the Body of Christ. So is it with our lives. Each one comes into the world alone, each one leaves the world alone. Alone each one has one day to stand before the dread Judgement Seat. There is something infinitely pathetic in the loneliness of every human soul. And yet, just as the Grace of God, though it is in a true sense a matter between each man individually and his Maker, must, by divine ordinance, be sought by that man through other men—through external sacraments, ministered by a human priest—so is the loneliness of life tempered by human society. We are born into a family, and consequently known by one name and not another. Thus, relations with others closely accompany the very dawn of life. As soon as may be after birth, the child is placed in its mother's arms and smiled upon by its father. As the years go on ties of various degrees of intimacy are knit with kindred. And soon the child learns that not only has he a family which is his own, but also he has a country which is his. He is English not French, or French not English. He is taught that he is, as it may be, the subject of a King, or the citizen of a Republic. Thus new interests, and with new interests new obligations, enter into his life. He learns not to live for himself alone. He finds out that he has people round about him whom he may trust to care for him in trouble and to stand by him in difficulty. These he calls his friends. So he comes to realise that he has duties—duties to his home, duties to his friends, duties to his motherland. He is alone, and yet he is *not* alone. He knows that alone he must render up his spirit one day to the God who made him, yet he may hope haply to see dear, familiar, comforting faces round about him, before his eyes are closed in death.

All this is true in the natural order—and, as we may be sure will be the case—we find close analogies in the supernatural. Every Catholic Christian is responsible to God alone from the first use of his reason to the end—to the Last Anointing and beyond—yet every Catholic Christian knows that he does *not* stand alone; he is made a member of a spiritual

Family, which is the Holy Church; he is made the subject of a King who reigns in Christ's place over His militant Kingdom; he is a unit in the Christian Society which is made visible on earth, but is also made perfect in Heaven—as such he finds that not only earthly friends are his, but also heavenly advocates in the Courts of Paradise. "You have come," writes the Apostle, "to the Spirits of the Just made perfect." He learns that God has given him not only a Mother on earth, but a Mother in Heaven, who is the Mother of his Elder Brother. In a sentence, he believes in the Communion of Saints. Though in one sense he must stand alone, and would not have it otherwise, yet in another sense it is not good for him that he should be alone. Consequently, not only in the ordinary conduct of his life, but also in his religion, his social needs are satisfied.

Our Lord was alone in His earthly Life yet not alone.

Catholics should, and do, remember that they are members one of another, and above all, members of Christ. Christ is the Head of the Body to which we belong. Our life, then, has to be modelled on His Life, who is our Head. Now, in one sense the Life of Christ was a Life of unutterable loneliness. Of Him it has been written that "He trod the Winepress alone, and there was no man with Him." Yet He had an earthly home, a home which He left only to do His Father's Will, to be about His Father's Business. He spoke pathetic words: "The birds of the air have their nests, and the foxes their holes, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His Head." Even whilst He was thus speaking, He had friends —Lazarus, the Magdalene, Martha, who from time to time received Him into her house, and others of whom we read in the Gospels. He had disciples, one of whom He loved with a special love, who to the end of time will be known as the Disciple whom Jesus loved. In early life a foster-father was given Him, specially chosen for the high office of protecting Him in infancy and childhood, who surely was very dear to His Sacred Heart.

The Mother of our Lord.

Above all, He had a Mother. Mary of Nazareth was the Mother of our Lord. No other woman could call Him son by right. No other, but He alone, born of woman, should be born of Her. In one sense—and that a most special sense—He could share Her with no other. He was her Son. He bestowed upon her the love, unique of its kind, which every child owes to the mother that bore him in her womb. She gave to Him, and to Him only, that love which a mother bears to the child that has drawn his life and blood from her veins—from the chalice of her heart. Yet in another, and in an equally true—if less close—sense, He shares her with us. She is our mother too, for we are His brothers and His sisters, redeemed from sin by that Precious Blood which flowed from off the Cross beneath which she stood on Calvary.

Mary loves us with a Mother's love, for we belong to her Family—she will disown none whom Her Son is not ashamed to call His brethren, and we owe and give her the love which is hers by right, both as the Mother of our Lord, and as the Mother of all who belong to Him.

Yes, the Mother of Christ is our Mother also, and to her—the Queen in her Beauty, the Queen at the King's right hand—do we turn, and salute her from this valley of tears, where we are sojourning yet awhile; for, as she cared for Jesus in His weakness, so, we know full well, for His sake will she care for us, and love us whilst she cares. There is nothing more tender in a world that is often hard, than is the devotion of Catholics to our Lady. It is the tenderness of children gathered round about the Mother of God who is their Mother—their Mother who was the gentle, loving Mother of Christ the Lord in the days of His Human weakness and of His Human needs.

As she cared for Him, so will she care for us.

If it be objected that Mary watched over Jesus only for a few short years—that He grew up—we reply that in the spiritual order we have to be children to the end. "Unless you become as little children, you shall not enter the Kingdom of Heaven," is said to the old man, on the verge of the grave—most of all is it said to the "successful" man, with even greater insistence than to the callow youth or to one of the world's broken failures. The more successful, the more self-reliant a man, the more urgently does he need the warning. *Childish* none of us should be. As we grow up we put away the things of a child. But *childlike* we all must be, as one day we hope to see the Face of God. Childlike in faith, in simplicity of spirit, in placing trust without limit where such trust is due. Now there is no surer test of a childlike spirit than devotion to the Blessed Virgin. Well for us is it if this devotion grows with our growth and increases with our years—to the end.

And as the Mother of God is our mother too, so the Saints and friends of God are our friends also. Believing then in the Communion of Saints, believing that death does not hamper the activities of the soul, believing that the Saints of God and that the Mother of God intercede for us in glory, the Church encourages her children to invoke the Saints, reigning together with Christ—above all to invoke our Blessed Lady. Are they not His friends and ours, is she not the Mother of God and the Mother of men?

Protestant objections.

Protestants are accustomed to bring two main objections against this consoling doctrine. It is urged that the Catholic Teaching interferes with the Mediatorial office of Christ—that whilst St. Paul says that there is One Mediator, Catholics make many—and also, that we can have no certainty that the Saints in Heaven hear our prayers on earth — that Catholics make the Blessed Virgin and the Saints ubiquitous — an Attribute which belongs to God alone.

The One Mediator.

We will consider these objections separately. It is quite true that we read in the Sacred Scriptures that as Moses was the Mediator of the Old Testament between God and man, so is Christ the Mediator of the New Testament,[1] and that "there is One God, and One Mediator of God and man, the Man Christ Jesus."[2] It is also true that this is elementary Catholic doctrine, taught to every Catholic child in every Catholic school throughout the world. But it is by no means true, and most certainly St. Paul does not say, that because Christ our Lord and Saviour is the Mediator between God and man in one sense, it follows that we, His creatures, cannot mediate with Him for one another in quite another sense. On the contrary, we shall find on examination that St. Paul uses the fact that we have a Mediator—who is the One Mediator between God and man—as a great argument why we *should* mediate for one another—in His Name.

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[1] Deut. v. 5; *cf.* Gal. iii. 19. Thus Milton writes (*Paradise Lost*, xii. 235 *et seq.*):

"The Voice of God
To mortal ear is dreadful. They beseech
That Moses might report to them His Will,
And terror cease. He grants what they besought,
Instructed that to God is no access
Without Mediator, whose high office now
Moses in figure bears; to introduce
One greater, of whose day he shall foretell,
And all the Prophets in their age the lines
Of Great Messiah sing."

[2] 1 Tim. ii. 5.

The sentence "There is One God and One Mediator between God and man" does not stand alone. It is preceded by the word "*for*"—that is, "*because*." The Apostle had just urged that "first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings (*εὐχαριστίαι*) be made for all men," in other words that we *should mediate* one for another. As a reason for thus acting, he reminds us that we have a Mediator, who is One as God is One. Through Him alone can we go to God. But through Him we can go, and can go with confidence, and *should* go not only on our own behalf but also pleading one for another. *For* (that is to say, *because*) we may have confidence that our prayers will be heard. If it were not for the existence of this Mediator, it might be useless for us to pray one for another; at any rate we could not appeal to His Name and seek God through Him, unless we believed that He had broken down the wall of partition that divided us from God, and, notwithstanding our sins, had reconciled us with Him. But, *because* we have access to God through Christ, we can and should pray for ourselves and for one another. Such is the Apostle's argument. No other explanation will make sense of his words. We are to "supplicate," "pray," "intercede" for one another—that is to "mediate"—through the Merits of Him who is the One Mediator, *because* He alone can mediate in His own Right. As Catholic theologians put it, we who dwell yet on earth, as well as the Saints and the Blessed Virgin in Heaven—are "mediators of Grace"; but Christ alone is "the Mediator of Justice." He alone has a *right* to be heard. Through Him Christian men and women, the Saints and Mary, pray with much confidence. And their prayers are heard in proportion to their confidence, in proportion to their nearness to God, to their sanctity. "The prayer," writes St. James —he is writing of the prayer of mediation one for another—"of a just man availeth much."[1] The nearer to God, the surer the answer to prayer. This is the reason why Catholics seek so earnestly the prayers of the Saints, above all why they implore the prayers of the Blessed Virgin. Who so near to Him as His Saints, who ministered to Him so faithfully on earth, and who now can sin no more? Above all, who so near to Him as the sinless Virgin, on whom He first smiled in the Crib of Bethlehem—who was His last earthly thought on the Cross of Calvary? The Saints are His Servants. Mary is His Servant; she is also His Mother.

The New Testament is full of exhortations to intercessory prayer. It is practised by all Christians. What Christian mother fails to pray—to "mediate"—for her son, or imagines that by thus acting she derogates from the supreme Mediation of the One Mediator, through whom she approaches the Throne of God ?

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[1] Jas. v. 16.

I once heard a street-preacher explain to his audience that he had at one time led an evil life, and had been "saved" by his faithful mother—he meant saved from sin and from the consequences of sin—by her prayers—by her mediation. He would no doubt have been shocked had he heard me preach in a Catholic Church that I hoped to be saved through the *Virgo Fidelis*—the faithful Mother of my God. Yet I should have meant, as any Catholic speaking thus means, and as he meant, that I hoped to be saved through a Mother's prayers, offered to God by Christ, and, in this sense only, by her mediation.

No Protestant is shocked when he reads the declaration of St. Paul that by becoming "all things to all men," he hoped to "save some."[1] When men use words—such words, for example, as *mediator* and *save*, everything depends upon the sense in which they use them. For Catholics the sense of these words is not arbitrary, but is fixed by the first principles of their religion.

It seems to me that all difficulty with regard to the intercession of our Lady and the Saints ought to vanish so soon as it is understood that their intercession does not differ in its nature from the intercession which all Christians should make on earth for their friends, and—if they listen to the exhortation of the Apostle—"for all men." After the Ascension of Christ His Mother lived in the house of John. Her prayers for the Beloved Disciple possessed the same character after her death as those which she offered for him during her life. The intercession of the Saints in Heaven differs only from the intercession of us poor sinners on the earth in the fact that their prayers are more likely to prevail than ours, because they are nearer to our Lord than we. Experience, as opposed to mere theory, proves that going to God together with His Saints and His Blessed Mother—asking not only our friends on earth, but also our friends and Mother in Heaven to intercede for us—greatly increases our confidence in Christ Himself. The Shepherds and the Wise Men—the simple and the learned—who "found Mary and Joseph and the Infant,"[1] "who found the Child with Mary His Mother,"[2] had not less freedom, but rather greater freedom, with the Holy Child because His Mother and His foster-father were kneeling by their side.

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[1] 1 Cor. ix. 22.

Experience proves that the more constantly we speak to Mary, the more constantly do we speak to Jesus in simple, trustful prayer. Experience proves to all who love Mary that the assurance of St.

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[1] Luke ii. 16.

[2] Matt. ii. 11.

Alphonsus is not idle, when he tells us that "the more we love Mary, the more we shall love God." How could it be otherwise? We love her on account of her motherly relation to her Son, and to us. The love of Mary intensifies the love of our Lord Jesus Christ. We need have no fear. Such is, and ever will be, the experience of all Catholics, who practise their religion. We love the Saints simply because they were, and are, His special friends, and walked most closely in His Footsteps. For this reason we know their power with God. We love and honour and trust His Blessed Mother, and we know that as we love and trust her, she will draw us gently to her Side beneath His Feet.

The Saints in Heaven can pray for men on earth.

But it may be urged: "You know that your friends on earth can pray for you. You can ask them to do so by word of mouth or by letter. How can you be sure that the Saints in Heaven can hear your prayers? They are gone beyond the reach of the human voice. You can have no communication with them. They are not ubiquitous. How then can they hear prayers put up at the same moment of time in different parts of the world?" To this we reply simply, "I believe in the Communion of Saints." It can be shown that the Church has always believed, as she believes to-day, that the Saints in Heaven hear the prayers of their friends on earth—that, as the Council of Trent teaches us "it is good and useful to invoke the Saints reigning together with Christ."[1] To this truth the early inscriptions in the Catacombs and the writings of the Fathers bear ample testimony. It is enshrined in the Apostles' Creed. The Communion of Saints, in which we express our belief whenever we recite that Creed, involves not only the communion of Christians on earth in prayer and sacrifice and sacraments and good works, but also the communion of Christians on earth with those who have gone before them to the City not built with hands. This communion is effected by God. If you ask us *how*, we answer: "*That* we do not know. To know *how* is not our business. We are concerned simply with the fact. After all, do we know exactly *how* God enables us to communicate with one another on earth? Do we really *understand* the mysteries of the telegraph, or of the telephone? Do we even understand *how* God enables us to communicate our ideas vocally with the friends on earth? If challenged, we should probably reply more or less after this fashion: "When I wish to speak to a friend, who understands my language, I clothe ideas, that are formed in my mind, with words—words which, by convention, are symbols of those ideas. I automatically form those words with my lips, throat and tongue, and I then utter them. They are carried on waves of ether to the ear of my friend. They strike the *tympanum* of his ear and are conveyed to his brain. In this manner he receives these words—these symbols—and they represent to his mind the ideas that I wish to convey to him." All quite true, no doubt, but does it take us very much further? In the end we have simply to say that God enables me to speak to my friend, and that, though I know something of the process by which this is accomplished, I do not know very much.

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[1] Sess. xxv.

With regard to the Saints, I know that they are not ubiquitous—I do not speak to their material ears, God enables their souls to know the yearning of my soul. *How* He accomplishes this I know not, and probably in my present state of existence could not understand. Catholic writers tell us that they who, like the Saints, see God in the Beatific Vision, "in Him see all things which it is well for them to see," and certainly hear the prayers of those who address them. This we believe; it is part of our religion. It does not trouble us that we do not know the precise method by which the Saints are able to know the needs of many mortals all over the world at the same time. I can use wireless telegraphy, though I may be profoundly ignorant as to *how* it operates. In like manner I can pray to the Blessed Virgin, or to any Saint, even though I cannot explain *how* our Lady or the Saint to whom I pray is enabled by God to hear me. It is enough for me to rest upon my religion, and to believe—as by God's Mercy, and to my great comfort, I do believe—in the Communion of Saints.

The Souls in Purgatory.

But the Communion of Saints reaches beyond this earth to souls, who are not in Heaven, and yet are the friends of God and our friends too. We call them the Holy Souls in Purgatory.

The Catholic Church teaches that not all the Friends of God, not all, that is, who die in the divine Love and Grace, are fit immediately after death to see His Face and dwell with Him eternally. For all God's Friends in need there is a period of purification beyond the grave — which we call Purgatory. Moreover, we believe that these waiting souls can be helped by us on earth.

The Council of Trent defined this doctrine, against the denials of Luther and Calvin and their followers. The Definition runs as follows: "There is a Purgatory, and the Souls there detained are helped by the prayers of the Faithful, and principally by the acceptable Sacrifice of the Altar."[1]

The Jews and Prayer for the Dead.

Faith in purification after death, and in efficacy of prayer for the departed is not the exclusive possession of Catholicism. Many other ancient religions have taught in the past, and continue to teach in the present, the possibility and the duty of helping the dead. This is true, for example, of the Jewish religion. A striking example of this is to be found in the Second Book of Machabees. We there read that after the

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[1] Sess. vi., cap. 30; Sess. xxii., cap. 2, 3.

Jewish hero Judas Machabeus had won a great victory over Gorgias "the governor of Idumæa,"[1] he found under the garments of Jews dead upon the battlefield things consecrated to idols[2] which it was unlawful for them to wear. The narrative proceeds that the survivors grieved when they saw this evidence of the superstition of their dead friends.

"And so, betaking themselves to prayers, they besought the Lord that the sin which had been committed might be forgotten. But the most valiant Judas exhorted the people to keep themselves from sin, forasmuch as they saw before their eyes what had happened, because of the sins of those that were slain.

"And making a collection, he sent twelve thousand drachms of silver to Jerusalem for sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the dead, doing very excellently, reasoning concerning the Resurrection—for if he had not hoped that they that were slain should rise again, he would have thought it superfluous and absurd to pray for the dead. But he saw well that a most fair reward is reserved for those who fall asleep in piety.

"It is, therefore, a holy and a wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins."[3]

The habit, then, of praying for the dead was inherited by the Church from the Synagogue. In this respect the Apostles made no violent break in their faith and devotional practice when they became the Disciples of Jesus Christ. With their Master, they were no doubt often present whilst sacrifices were being offered for the dead in the Temple at Jerusalem.

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[1] 2 Mac. xii. 32.

[2] In the LXX *ἱερώματα*.

[3] 2 Mac. xii. 40-46.

It is true that there were Jews at the time of Christ who by no means "reasoned excellently concerning the Resurrection." The Sadducees denied that there was any Resurrection of the dead. They deemed it "superfluous and absurd to pray for the dead"—because they imagined that those whom men call *dead* lived no more. But all Jews who understood that, as our Lord reminded His unbelieving questioners, God who is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, is the God not of the dead but of the living, and that consequently their fathers who had passed beyond the veil of sense, still lived, understood also the duty of offering prayer and sacrifice on behalf of the souls of the departed. Those they loved and often venerated, who had "fallen asleep in piety," might too probably, like the soldiers of whom we read in the Book of Machabees—the soldiers who fell before the arms of Gorgias—have, in the days of their mortality, committed offences for which punishment was still due to the Justice of God.

I am well aware that what is called "the modern mind" shrinks from such a phrase as "punishment due to the Justice of God." Yet nothing is more

The Divine Punishment of Sin.

certain than the fact that throughout the Scriptures both of the Old and New Testament we are assured that God does punish sin both in this life and in the life to come. In the Old Testament we are told that Wisdom—that is to say God the Son—"brought man out of his sin"—in other words forgave him the guilt of his sin, "and bestowed upon him power to govern all things."[1] Man, even after sin, is rightly called creation's Lord. Yet, the punishment due to him remained to be endured. "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread until thou returnest to the earth out of which thou wast taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return."[2] The incredulity of Moses and Aaron was forgiven them, yet the punishment due to their sin was inflicted by God. They were shut out from the earthly Land of Promise. "Because you have not believed Me, you shall not bring these people into the land which I will give them."[3] The sin of David against Uriah the Hittite was declared by the Prophet to be forgiven, yet the terrible punishment had to be endured. "And David said to Nathan: I have sinned against the Lord. And Nathan said to David: The Lord hath taken away thy sin. Nevertheless, because thou hast given occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child that is born to thee shall surely die."[4]

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[1] Wisdom x. 2.
[2] Gen. iii. 19.
[3] Num. xx. 12.
[4] 2 Kings xii. 13, 14.

We find the same principle at work in the New Testament. For example we are told that certain debts due to the Justice of God have to be paid to "the last farthing,"[1] and of a man who commits "the sin against the Holy Ghost" (final impenitence) we read that "it shall not be forgiven him—neither in this world, nor in the world to come."[2] From which statement of our Lord St. Augustine takes occasion to argue as follows: "that some sinners are not forgiven either in this world or the next world would not be said with truth, unless there were others who, though not forgiven in this world, are forgiven in the world to come."[3] Whatever we may think of this inference, at any rate our Lord's words prove the truth that sins are punished by God not only in this world but also in the next.

Indeed the fact that God punishes sin will hardly be denied by any man who has had experience of life and believes in God at all. It is not necessary further to labour the point. Surely, the teaching of the Catholic Religion is full of consolation, assuring us that the punishment of sin which springs from the awful Justice and Sanctity of God—"His eyes are too pure to behold evil"[4]—is intended by the Divine goodness to purify us even on earth, and that it is always purifying in Purgatory, where no obstacle is placed by the wilfulness of the creature to the

[1] Matt. v. 26.

[2] Matt. xii. 32.

[3] *De Civitate Dei*, xxii. 24.

[4] Hab. i. 13.

merciful designs of his Creator. Who is there amongst us that really thinks that he is now fit to see God face to face? "Bear *without stain* this garment before the Judgement Seat of Christ" is said to the child at Baptism. Who is there that can really believe that he has so hearkened to this warning, that no stain is there upon that Robe of Entrance which must be washed out, no dust that must be lifted off, before he can enter, without discomfort, the Marriage Feast of the Lamb? As we think of our own souls, as we think of the souls of our friends who have departed this life—for we cannot fail to know that not all our friends have lived on earth as Saints—we thank God that the purification which is so necessary goes on beyond the grave. We thank God also that we can help the dead, and that when our turn comes we may look to those we leave behind for the aid which we have not grudged to those who have gone before us.

Jews at the present day who believe in the life to come still pray for their dead, both publicly in their synagogues, and privately in their homes. Catholics, however, have the great advantage over Israelites in the fact that they can pray, not only for the living but also for the dead, to God *through Jesus Christ.* Judas Machabeus procured the offering of sacrifices for his dead soldiers. Those sacrifices derived all their efficacy from the fact that they looked forward as types to the one great Sacrifice which it is our privilege actually to offer upon our altars.

The Early Fathers and Mass for the Dead.

So is it that the custom of praying for the dead which Tertullian in the second century mentions as an Apostolic Ordinance, urging a widow "to make oblations for him on the anniversary of her husband's death," and charging her with infidelity if she neglect to succour his soul,[1] was practised especially in the Holy Mass. For example, St. Cyril of Jerusalem, describing the Sacred Liturgy, writes: "Then we pray for the holy fathers and Bishops who are dead, and in short for all those who have departed this life in our communion, believing that the souls of those for whom prayers are offered receive very great relief, while this Holy and tremendous Victim lies upon the Altar."[2]

St. John Chrysostom assures us that the custom of placing the names of the departed in the diptychs, and then remembering them by name in the Holy Mysteries of the Altar (a practice that was handed down to the Church by the Apostles) is the best way of relieving the dead.[3]

St. Ambrose insists in his commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians[4] on the existence of Purgatory, and in his funeral oration on the Emperor Theodosius thus prays for his soul: "Give, O Lord, rest to Thy servant Theodosius, that rest which Thou hast prepared for Thy Saints. . . . I loved him, therefore will I follow him to the land of the Living; I will not desert him until by my tears and lamentations he shall be admitted to the holy mount of the Lord, to which his merits call him."[1]

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[1] *De Monogamia*, cap. x.

[2] *Catechet. Mystog.*, *q.v.*

[3] In *Ad Cor.*, Hom. xli., n. 4.

[4] In 1 Cor. iii

St. Augustine tells us that "some there are who have departed this life not so bad as to be unworthy of mercy, nor so good as to be entitled to immediate happiness," and some there are, he says, who must "go through those pains to which the spirits of the dead are liable."[2]

It is, then, clearly taught by the early Fathers of the Church:

(1) That the prayers for the dead which are to be found in all the early Liturgies, or Rites for the offering of the Sacrifice of the Mass, represented the practice of the Apostles.

(2) That the souls aided by these prayers were in a state of purgation.

Such is the Catholic doctrine handed down in the Church from her first beginnings.

The instinctive desire to speak to the dead.

Deep down in the human heart lies the desire to communicate with the departed. Necromancy under various forms has been practised in every age of the world's history. In our days it has taken the form of Spiritism (incorrectly but more commonly termed Spiritualism).

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[1] *De Obitu Theodosii.* [2] *De Civitate Dei,* xxi. 24.

It is impossible to exaggerate the dangers that accompany any attempts to evoke the spirits of the dead. Such attempts are condemned in the strongest terms by the Holy Scriptures and by the Catholic Church. Experience proves that those unhappy persons who, in defiance of the prohibition of their religion, tamper with forbidden practices of this nature, gradually find that their moral sense has been perverted and their will-power weakened, and too often lose their Faith. And after all, what excuse shall we have to offer to God, should we out of idle curiosity yield to superstition and turn aside to what at best is doubtful and dark—to something which we know to be most sinful—when our religion gives us the consolation which God sees that His children need in sorrow.

That which is unlawful.

Inspired by the truth of the Catholic doctrine of the Communion of Saints, taught us in the Creed, we know that we are not alone, even when we may seem to be most alone. The Everlasting Arms are round about us. And we are surrounded by a great crowd of witnesses. We can help the dead and the dead help us. It is not indeed taught by the Church as *of Faith* that the Souls in Purgatory can pray for us, though this is the reasoned conviction of great Saints and Theologians, and seems to have been proved again and again in the experience of the Faithful who receive wonderful answers to their prayers to the Holy Souls. It *is*

That which is lawful.

of Faith that the Souls in Purgatory will one day reach Heaven and that the Saints in Heaven pray for their friends on earth.

The inscriptions in the Catacombs show especially that in the early days of persecution fathers and mothers whose little children had gone before them, clothed in baptismal innocence, to the Throne of God, sought with confidence those children's prayers.

We too may seek with confidence the help of those who have already travelled the last journey we one day must travel, and in this manner, unforbidden, hold sweet communion with those we have loved on earth.

The Church that has given us so much, has given us friends in the Heavenly country. Her Saints raise their hands to help us. Over all the Saints reigns their Queen, our Mother. If we trust her now, and seek her Motherly aid in all our needs, one day beyond a doubt we shall see her with her Son. Then, with her, we shall adore, and, with her, we shall see, the Human Features of her Child Jesus—her God and our God, her Lord and our Lord.

Devotion to our Lady, to the Saints, and to the Holy Dead, is in truth one of the greatest gifts that God has bestowed upon us in the beautiful religion which is ours.

CHAPTER XXVII

CONCLUSION

THERE are two great questions which, sooner or later, every man who believes in God will find recurring to his mind—unless either he has answered them once for all and is at peace within himself, or has resolutely closed and barred the door, making it fast against enquiry.

First: *What am I to believe concerning the supernatural?* For, that the supernatural is a reality—that the belief in an order of phenomena which is above nature is no mere figment of the imagination—every man who faces the experience of life will in his heart admit; and then secondly: *How shall I be enabled to overcome my passions?* For, that there is, or at least that there should be, a struggle between his lower and his higher desires, no man is allowed altogether to forget.

These two questions may be linked together as one. *What am I to believe and how am I to live as I should?* In other words: *What shall I do to be saved?*

In every age, Catholic Christianity has given the same answer, simple, precise, categorical, all-sufficing: *Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.*

Belief in the Lord Jesus Christ—belief that Jesus Christ is the Lord Incarnate—involves belief that He is not only our Teacher, but also our Saviour, for this is the meaning of His Name. Belief in our Lord Jesus Christ brings with it, in this life, salvation for the intellect from error and darkness, salvation for the will from the slavery of sin, salvation for the whole man from the powers of evil. When this life is over, belief in our Lord Jesus Christ will give place to sight, when we shall see face to face Him in whom we have believed on earth. "Whom not having seen," writes St. Peter, "you love, in whom, though now you see Him not, you, believing, rejoice . . . receiving the end of your faith *even the salvation of your souls*, of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you."[1]

In this book I have endeavoured to show that the answer given by Catholic Christianity to the problem of life does not consist of "cunningly devised fables,"[2] but has come to us, as a living Tradition, from the holy Apostles who "have made known the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ—who were eyewitnesses of His Majesty,"[3] and have handed down to us, in the Church which is the heir of His

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[1] 1 Peter i. 8-10.

[2] 2 Peter i. 16.

[3] *Ibid.*

Promises and the home of His Spirit, that which they received—"the Form of Sound Words"[1]—"the common salvation—the Faith once delivered to the Saints."[2]

He who rightly believes in our Lord Jesus Christ who is the Head, believes also in the Church of God which is His Body.

The answer to *What am I to believe?* is *The Catholic Faith.* For this Faith is guaranteed to us by our Lord through His Promises to His Church.

The answer to *How am I to overcome myself?* is *Through the Grace of Christ.*

"Wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from the body of this death?"[3] "I thank God," wrote the Apostle, that delivery shall come to me "through Jesus Christ our Lord."

"Where sin hath abounded, there has Grace much more abounded."[4]

So it is that every child of the Catholic Church, from his supernatural birth in Baptism to his departure from this world, is encompassed by the abundant grace of God; is protected by the prayers of the whole Company of Heaven—"for we have come . . . unto Mount Sion . . . and to the Spirits of just men made perfect"[5]—and, after his soul has left the body, is aided, still, by Divine Mysteries upon the earth.

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[1] 2 Tim. i. 13.

[2] Jude 3.

[3] Rom. vii. 24, 25.

[4] Rom. v. 20.

[5] Heb. xii. 22, 23.

Catholic Christianity supplies the key to all life's problems, so far as we need that the problems be solved whilst still we see as in a glass darkly and not yet face to face.

Safety, then, is to be found in the Communion of that Church which Christ built on His Chief Apostle as upon a Rock, that Church which is the home of His Spirit, who is the Spirit of Truth and the Sanctification of the souls, in which He abides together with the Father and the Son.

As Cardinal Manning expressed it in a sentence: When confronted with the Catholic Church we must be "either critics or disciples." If Catholic Christianity is merely a system of religion devised by men, it is open to criticism, but for those of us who are convinced that the Catholic Church is the Church of God the path is clear—though of necessity still beset with difficulty—it is the path of discipleship.

Ours it is to keep the Faith, in no way troubled or surprised when we find that to the "Modern Mind" it is still what the Apostle tells us that "the things of the Spirit are to the Natural Man," what our Lord Jesus Christ Himself was to "the Greeks"—mere "foolishness."[1] We are to "live" not by the imaginings of "the Modern Mind," but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."[2]

Once again let me say it. *Either criticism or discipleship.* Momentous is the choice. For myself, by this alone do I hope to be saved—by the grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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[1] 1 Cor. ii. 14; i. 23.

[2] Matt. iv. 4.

I am writing these last words of my book on the Feast of the Apostles Simon and Jude. My task has been concerned mainly with the Word of God, which they received. To them and to all the holy Apostles I commend myself and all who read what I have written. Ours is the heritage bequeathed to us by these mighty Apostles of Christ, who one day, with Him, shall judge the Tribes of Israel. May Peter, Prince of the Apostolic Company, who holds the Keys, open to every one of us the gates of Heaven; may Paul, the great Vessel of Election, chosen to carry the Name of Jesus to those who sat in darkness, intercede for us all that we forget not the words that have been written: "The just shall live by faith; but if any man draw back, My soul shall have no pleasure in him."[1] God in His mercy forbid that any of us should be "of those who draw back unto perdition." Rather may our lot—yours and mine—be with them that believe to the salvation of the soul, for: "Without faith it is impossible to please God."[2]

[1] Heb. x. 38, 39.

[2] Heb. xi. 6.

APPENDIX

LETTER I

EGYPT,
February 1, 1916.

MY DEAR WATKIN,

A friend of mine, until lately a Unitarian, now a Catholic, has read *Catholic Christianity* in proof. He thinks that any man who is a disciple of Bishop Berkeley in philosophy would be much dissatisfied with the statement marked (*b*) on page 4. I replied that it was impossible, within my limits, to deal with all possible metaphysical positions. Moreover, Idealism will never be the plain man's creed; and even at Oxford, as you know, Dr. Rashdall is left, a solitary mourner, to bewail its funeral.

However, I shall be very much obliged if you will write and tell me what you think of my friend's criticism.

Yours very sincerely,
O. R. VASSALL-PHILLIPS, C.SS.R.

LETTER II

45, CHALFONT ROAD, OXFORD,
February 16, 1916.

DEAR FR. VASSALL,

I agree with your friend that the statement (*b*) on page 4 requires a certain modification, since it *is possible* to call in question the existence of a material world, external to, and independent of, percipient minds. Nevertheless, such a reflection is always the artificial product of philosophic speculation. The plain unsophisticated common sense of mankind has ever believed, and will ever believe, that the objective reality of the objects of perception is given in their perception itself. Surely, this *consensus* should not be lightly set aside. Moreover, if, for argument's sake, the idealist position be granted, it must surely follow—unless we are to fall into pure solipsism, a patent absurdity—that the ordered universe of mutually inter-dependent phenomena cannot be caused by our own mind. Neither can it be caused by the minds of all men together. Hence we are driven to postulate a Deity on whose Mind this cosmos of phenomena depends. Thus does Idealism lead us straight to Theism. (This, of course, is the idealist argument for Theism—cogent, if Idealism be granted—which is taught by Dr. Rashdall). But, if we believe in a Deity, it is surely incredible that He, who must be Absolute Truth, has subjected the human race to the illusion of belief in a material universe not really existent. Therefore Idealism cannot be true. So we see that Idealism postulates a Theism which is itself destructive of Idealism. In other words, Idealism is self-destructive. Of course this letter is not meant to be a satisfactory philosophical discussion of the idealist position. But if you can insert something of this kind, it will, I think, suffice to prevent any idealist who may come across your book from putting it away impatiently and refusing to read further.

Yours very sincerely,
E. WATKIN.

LETTER III

EGYPT,
March 9, 1916.

MY DEAR WATKIN,

Very many thanks. It is impossible at this stage to make any changes in the body of my book. But, with your permission, I will insert your letter, which I have just received, in an Appendix. It expresses the gist of the matter far more concisely and satisfactorily than I could have done without your kind help. The publication of the book will, I fear, have to wait until after the war.

Yours very sincerely,
O. R. VASSALL-PHILLIPS, C.SS.R.

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Printed in England.

28182